

**SESSION ABSTRACTS**  
**ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING**  
**OCTOBER 27-31, 2010 – ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

**Session 1.1      New Civil Rights Narratives and Reconstruction of Social Memory in a Suburban Atlanta County: A Faculty/Student Oral History Project**

Jason C. Lutz

**Hugh Grogan, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, and the Fight for African American Representation in a Georgia Suburb.** This paper is an attempt to identify the accomplishments of, and perseverance of a Georgia civil rights activist in the decade after Dr. Martin Luther King. Too often the achievements of individuals, in civil rights, are ignored or underrepresented if not attached to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. This is an attempt to reverse that trend and highlight the achievements of Hugh Grogan during the early to mid-1970s in Marietta, Georgia. This narrative focuses on *Grogan v. Hunter*, which was a lawsuit that reached the United States District Court in 1973. In this case, Hugh Grogan took on the establishment of “whites-only” city politics and demanded the reapportionment of the Marietta voter wards. Following two city councilmen elections during the early 1960s, in which African American men ran for office, the city racially gerrymandered the voting wards, successfully diluting the voting strength of Marietta’s African American community. In this paper, we will see the evolution of Hugh Grogan, from medical student to public advocate and civil rights activist, his achievements and his failures, and see how his legacy helps to support other African American politicians nationwide. His story is deciphered through many sources but most importantly, through the oral histories of those who knew and interacted with him. Finally, this paper is an attempt to show the need for the continued protection provided under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Under criticism from local Georgia politicians, these protections have come under attack as vestiges of a by-gone era. By highlighting the achievements of Hugh Grogan we can counter these claims.

Ruthie Yow

**New Narratives of School Desegregation and the Reconstruction of Social Memory, Cobb County, Georgia, 1965-1970**

This paper seeks to interrogate and refashion familiar narratives of southern school desegregation, with emphasis on the story of a courageous but little-known Georgia integrator. Between the pioneering desegregation scholarship of lawyer Derrick Bell and the contemporary work of desegregation policy scholars such as Gary Orfield unfolds a beckoning terrain of untold stories. This paper tells one such story—that of Mableton, Georgia, native Virginia Ward, who endured her county’s desegregation years as the sole black student in her local high school. Ward’s tale invites us to pose questions about the relationship between young black women’s experiences of desegregation and those deemed iconic in the annals of the *Brown v. Board* Era: Melba Pattillo Beals of the Little Rock Nine, Charlayne Hunter-Gault of the University of Georgia and little Ruby Bridges of New Orleans. These legends of the school desegregation era embody the respectability, moral courage and eventual triumph that emblazons desegregation in social memory. This paper offers as an intervention the words of Virginia Ward—who grew up poor and had difficulty learning to read, who did not see her story published, televised or photographed, whose bravery went uncelebrated, even in her own community. The *Brown* Era encapsulated by the victory-over-violence narratives of extraordinary adolescents obscures the crucial issues of community, gender and especially class that coursed through the daily struggles of desegregation in many southern schools. The story of school desegregation, as told by Virginia Ward, begins to suggest the many paths that “first children” navigated in the mid sixties, and, by extension, renders a fuller picture of our current challenges in desegregation. Uncovering and questioning our shared stories will not alone make us more just. But I do dare hope that new narratives, such as this one, and oral histories of the *Brown* Era can help us powerfully confront the cultural and historical dynamics of school de- and re-segregation in the South today.

LeeAnn Lands

**Student Participation in Cross-Cultural Public Humanities Projects: What Do Students Gain?**

This paper will discuss preliminary findings from an on-going study that assesses the impact of student participation in public humanities projects on particular social and research skills and social-cultural understanding. Launched in 2003 to systematically examine and improve the delivery of my own courses, I recently expanded the study to investigate my colleague’s oral history course, a class that focused on the collection of oral histories from black residents of Cobb County and particularly members of the Cobb County NAACP. As part of this study, I have sought to understand how student participation in such project facilitates the understanding of the process of “doing” history and improves oral history skills (such as the ability to interview effectively, design interview questions, adopt appropriate ethical standards). But the study’s primary objective has been to understand how student participation in cross-cultural public history projects expands knowledge of African American history since 1965 and economic/social justice movements; increases knowledge of the inequality in U.S. society, including responses to discrimination; fosters the desire and ability to participate in other cultural documentation projects; improves multicultural understanding; and shifts attitudes about and increases awareness of privilege and power in American society. The project also asks in what ways particular types of documentation project could be effective in introducing multicultural experiences into what normally are (in Kennesaw State University’s current environment) predominantly white public humanities courses.

**Session 1.3      Audio Histories and Tours of Change, Hope and Adaptation**

Carrie Kline

**Took Off Running: Race and Culture along a West Virginia Turnpike**

Carrie Nobel Kline, along with her co-producer Michael Kline, unveils the experience of marginalized and stereotyped Appalachians. Living in the shadow of industry, coal, oil, gas and saline, to name a few, West Virginians rarely have an opportunity to speak for themselves. But when they do, look out. The results are rollicking, funny, poignant and profound.

Carrie Kline presents dramatic examples of narrative and music from the Kline's production, *Took Off Running*. Europeans and African-Americans traveled through or landed in West Virginia, working on the turnpikes, the railroad, and building Weston's massive Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum of hand-cut stone. Others worked in homes, farms and factories. Gypsies and Jesse James traveled the Pike. Cultures united and collided. Slaves worked in local inns and as secretive conductors on the Underground Railroad to freedom.

In this session, witness the drama of human courage as immigrants and slaves struggled to free themselves, assisted by brave allies. Climb up and downstairs to glimpse the impressive architecture and inside life of Parkersburg's finest homes, through the lens of black and white experience. And dance to the rhythm of some of West Virginia's best homemade music.

The Klines interweave individual oral testimony sessions into fast-paced productions with no external narrator but plenty of lively local voices and music. As proprietors of Talking Across the Lines, LLC, Michael and Carrie Nobel Kline have produced 23 audio tapestries based on oral testimonials and regional music. They see audio history and cultural heritage tourism as opportunities for community residents and visitors to explore their own notions of truths in the context of diverse perspectives. This panel will be inspiring and provocative for those interested in enhancing the experience of local citizens and visitors alike.

Elizabeth Lowman

#### **Postcards and Perceptions: Refuting Racism through Oral History**

Postcards and Perceptions is an exhibit that features Seminole History as it was presented to the public in postcards. Unfortunately, the postcards were often politically incorrect and did not truly depict Seminole life. Postcard creators often did not see the Seminoles as people and therefore did not identify the people in the postcards or labeled the postcards with inappropriate names such as "squaw." For the postcards that did provide an accurate presentation of Seminole life, there was no real commentary to bring the story to life.

The oral history project that came about for this exhibit was two-fold: the first part was identifying the people and the places in the postcards. After countless hours of travelling to various reservations and talking to hundreds of Tribal seniors, most of the postcards were identified. People shared the names and clans of the people in the pictures and the stories to accompany them. The second part consisted of conducting new interviews and researching old interviews to piece together a meaningful audio tour.

The audio tour is featured as a cell phone tour in the museum and a podcast tour on the museum's website. The oral histories chronicle the growth of the Tribe from tourist camps where the Seminoles were exhibited to the great financial successes of purchasing Hard Rock International and the growth of Florida casinos. The oral histories also share the personal stories about great Seminole entertainers, artists, politicians and leaders such as Corey Osceola, Betty Mae Jumper, and James Billie.

I will discuss the construction of the audio tour and how oral histories brought the stories of the postcards to life. I will also play clips from the audio tour and show pictures of the exhibit.

Sarah Yahm

#### **Loma Prieta 20 Years Later: A Case Study in Embodied Oral History**

New forms of mobile digital technologies permit us to curate public spaces in a bottom up fashion that fits the ideological and methodological imperatives of oral history. They provide new modes of engaging with the spatial aspects of community, infusing the built environment with living audible traces of its inhabitants. How can we use these soundwalks/oral history walking tours as a form of critical pedagogy? To generate important critical public conversations?

This paper is based on a self-designed summer course in the Community Studies department at UCSC where we created an audio walking tour of downtown Santa Cruz to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake. Santa Cruz was nearly destroyed during the earthquake, and in the aftermath community leaders attempted to "solve" social problems through redesign. The idea behind this walking tour was to teach our listeners how to analyze and interpret the landscape that they move through every day--to use storytelling and memories to demonstrate the ways in which power and surveillance affect urban cityscapes and circumscribe our movements and everyday experiences. We wanted to teach our listeners how to read the power dynamics embedded within the physical landscape of downtown Santa Cruz, and to become aware of their own role within those relationships of power.

This paper examines the potential behind these mobile media projects to generate new forms of community engagement through the development of "critical empathy." This oral history walking tour model uses the embodied presence of the participant to generate a critical understanding of familiar spaces. In the vein of Elizabeth Ellsworth, I am arguing that pedagogy is not about information transmission but "sensation construction," and teachers/media-makers should not try to simply impart knowledge but rather create "technologies of emergent experience[1]." It is through these new technologies that new subjectivities can emerge as people learn to see old landscapes in new ways.

Ryan Russell Hunt

### **Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon: Nazi Formation of Female Identity in Propaganda of the Third Reich, 1933-1945**

The National Socialist construction of female identity begins with the establishment of the JM and BDM in June, 1933. Girls between the ages of 10-14 joined in the JM, while girls between the ages of 14-18 joined the BDM. These organizations were intended to promote Nazi political, social, and cultural doctrine, as well as create unity and community for all German girls. Through these organizations the Nazis were able to form the identity for females and their roles in society for the future generations of Germany. Before World War II, the Nazis formed an identity for females that centered on charity, motherhood and used their adaptation of racial knowledge and health, and the German culture and society to create this ideal for the future mothers of Germany. However these ideals were then adapted, adding the provider role that were previously performed by males, to assist Germany in its aim of winning the war. This presentation explores this formation of female identity and social roles in the Third Reich and uses the experiences, memories, and thoughts attained from oral history interviews to explain the overall understanding of the Nazi propaganda and the acknowledgement of influence on girls. While understanding these stories, one can explore how children work within a system, such as the Third Reich, to create opportunities, gain leeway, and achieve personal goals.

### **Session 1.6      Terror and Its Human Impacts**

Meriam Lobel

#### **Framing September 11<sup>th</sup> History to Inspire Change**

September 11<sup>th</sup> changed the world. How can the stories of people who were deeply impacted by the shocking and horrific attacks inspire young people to confront history and work to change the future? Using multimedia stories of 3 people who suffered individually or as part of a community after September 11<sup>th</sup>, this talk will invite the audience to look at the way we present the stories of an event in history that is so recent it is difficult to define.

The presentation will be based upon online educational materials for middle school and high school students, *September 11<sup>th</sup> Personal Stories of Transformation*, produced by the Tribute WTC Visitor Center. In this presentation, we will look at 3 of the stories that present points of view less frequently discussed in the media. The first story highlights a 9/11 widow who created a foundation to train and empower widows in Afghanistan. The second story features a Pakistani man in Brooklyn who developed a community organization to strengthen the participation of the South Asian population in the civic fabric of the city. The third story features Masahiro Sasaki, brother of the legendary Sadako of the 1000 cranes, who reached out to the people of New York after 9/11 to highlight the international impact of September 11<sup>th</sup> and to share his wish for compassion.

The audience will be asked to share their thoughts about the ways we can best talk about 9/11 with young people today in order to both convey the facts of history and to provide hope and inspiration. The presentation will ask the audience to reflect on why oral histories become such an important tool in telling this story.

Christine Muller

#### **Constructing Cultural Trauma through Popular Press Oral Histories of September 11**

In this paper I examine how popular press oral histories have contributed to the construction of September 11 as a cultural trauma. Specifically, three oral history collections produced for mass consideration have been overtly promoted as documenting history through the testimonies of “ordinary people” who witnessed the September 11 attacks in person: *New York Times* journalist Dean E. Murphy’s *September 11: An Oral History*, former *New York Daily News* gossip columnist Mitchell Fink and his wife Lois Matthias’s *Never Forget: An Oral History of September 11*, and writer, actor, and Drew University Theater Arts instructor Damon DiMarco’s *Tower Stories: An Oral History of 9/11*. Each collection includes anecdotes of how survivors escaped from the World Trade Center’s (WTC) vicinity before or during its destruction. Given the respect generally accorded firsthand accounts, which these texts assertively invoke, the arbitrary yet intimate suffering these oral histories recount wield a compelling authority about what constitutes September 11.

However, each collection also links readers’ recollections – likely formed from afar through the news media – to these more authoritative, “on-the-ground” reports. Indeed, media coverage of the WTC on September 11 practically ensures that most contemporary readers would have their own memories of that site. Accordingly, this core set of stories mediates between individual and collective meaning disruption and reconstruction, proffering a publicly available and commonly accessible site for shaping a communal September 11 history. In effect, these narratives characterized by confusion, vulnerability, and doubt supplement readers’ memories of that day and anticipations of their own potentially fearful futures with professedly veridical tales of what has been, and continues to be, at stake for everyone. At the same time, though, this insistent sense of helplessness, a condition subverting any stable notions of subjectivity, agency, and responsibility, complicates how an initially incredible and incomprehensible crisis can become credible and intelligible. As a result, these discrete personal ordeals root a history of September 11 in a shared radical unsettlement that persists as a cultural trauma.

Wendy Painting

### ***The Oklahoma Dissidents: An Extraordinary Tale of Healing and the Search for Hidden Information***

The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing resulted in the deaths of one hundred sixty-eight people, including nineteen children, and left over eight-hundred injured. Although two men, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were convicted of the bombing, many family members and survivors would question the Official Story of the bombing. In 1997, one hundred and seventy family members and survivors initiated a law suit against the United States Government in an attempt to gain vital information. The search for hidden information continues to this day as Freedom of Information Act Requests are continuously being filed and appealed at the Supreme Court level. Additionally, there are several lawsuits seeking to depose federal prison inmates who wish to share publicly what they know.

One amazing aspect of this near fifteen year struggle is the relationships that formed across traditional boundaries and social strata in the pursuit to obtain a more complete and accurate narrative about the tragedy, the years that led up to it, and to gain some sense of closure. These alliances include survivors, victims' family members, eye witnesses, material witnesses, perpetrators, politicians, and others with connections to the event or material knowledge of it. Noted author, Ambrose-Evans Pritchard has called the community "The Oklahoma Dissidents." The Dissident community has defied accepted Perpetrator/ Terrorist and Victim boundaries, culminating in contradictory and little explored social relationships. Their existence, so many years later, speaks to inherent, but largely unacknowledged challenges to, and contradiction within previous understandings of modern domestic terrorism and its victims.

This paper is an attempt to explore and document some of the more extraordinary displays of resilience, ingenuity, and compassion by victims and perpetrators alike, and also attempts to illustrate the harrowing process of constructing these types of historical counter narratives. The paper and presentation utilizes archive research at the University of Texas and extensive field interviews and personal correspondence with family members, survivors, attorneys, eye witnesses, perpetrators and implicated others.

### **Session 1.7      Theoretical and Practical Challenges in Oral History**

Timothy Hensley

#### ***I Did Not Interview the Dead: Approaches to Interviewing Survivors of Tragic Events***

At the end of World War II, David Boder, a psychology professor from the Illinois Institute of Technology, visited displaced persons camps in Central and Western Europe to conduct the first oral history interviews with Holocaust survivors. Over the following six decades, Holocaust and human rights organizations have followed suit, collecting testimony from survivors and witnesses of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Not only do these interviews give a window into the experiences of the individual, but they define our understanding of the events themselves, providing a unique perspective on history and the human condition.

But how does one approach an interview with survivors of tragic events? How does one prepare and what can be expected? What are the methodological problems encountered with this type of interview?

This paper will attempt to examine all of these factors in order to illustrate what techniques might be useful in approaching interviews with sensitive subjects. By evaluating the approaches used when interviewing survivors of genocide, mass killings, and other refugee crises, we will discuss how to prepare questions, carry out interview sessions, deal with emotionally charged topics, prepare potential interviewers, and present the final product.

Ricardo Santhiago - Universidade de São Paulo / FAPESP

#### ***Each one on its own square, or Please don't talk about ethics: Some unaccountable misconceptions of (a certain) oral history in Brazil***

As it happens in many countries, the oral history in Brazil has a plenty of trends, therefore is not possible to talk about one only "brazilian oral history". Scholars from different disciplines and with different purposes have used interviews in their researches, indicating distinguished senses to what is considered "oral history". However, there is a feature related to several oral historians, regardless of their academic alignments: the militancy. It is true that, at least since the 1960s, this is an oral history's hallmark throughout the world - and it gained an authorized and recognized area as a politically engaged method. Over time, this "militancy" has become a stigma, either positive or negative, bound to oral history's practitioners. On one hand, it is evoked to suggest that the academic work has a greater value when it is associated with political causes; on the other hand, it is used as a tool to discredit the work of some authors and groups. In view of these conditions, some oral history practitioners have been carrying out a kind of assepsis on their theoretical and methodological stances, and this discourse has been transplanted to the very doing oral history, it is, proclaimed in textbooks, courses, lectures. Those "activists" say that just using a particular type of procedure (in recording, transcription, publishing, approaching, returning) a "fair" and "ethical" research is guaranteed. But "ethics" and "methodology" are not concepts of the same order. From the perspective of the history of intellectual culture, I intend to discuss in this paper how this "cosmetization" is embodied in the recent production of oral history in Brazil, that is, in the texts published from 1998 to nowadays.

## **Session 1.8      Moments of Awareness: Narrating and Representing Race and Racial Consciousness**

Brenden Martin

### **Panel Title: “Representing Race and Racial Consciousness”**

This presentation will explore case studies of exhibitions that utilized oral histories with African American narrators and will offer practical guidance on the best practices for the use of oral accounts in exhibit development. Exploring the process of developing oral sources with black narrators, the interpretation of meaning, and the creation of public representations of racial identity, Martin will also discuss the difficult challenges and rewarding opportunities of understanding across racial lines. Drawing from oral history projects led by the presenter that produced exhibits in North Carolina, Louisiana, and Tennessee, Martin will discuss the interpretive techniques that worked successfully as well as the issues of shared authority that influenced the exhibit development process. He will also spotlight how the personal frame of reference and administrative obstacles can fundamentally shape the outcome of exhibit development.

The presentation will initially investigate the New South Oral History Program, which was created to support the research efforts for exhibits and public programs at the Museum of the New South in Charlotte, North Carolina. This collection provided the foundation for oral-based exhibitions that interpreted issues of regional African American history, including exhibits on school desegregation and the role of black churches. The presentation will also examine an oral history project that focused on the desegregation of Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. This project encountered numerous challenges ranging from obstacles imposed by IRB to interference by University administration. Nonetheless, the exhibit development process underscores the brokering method that some controversial projects must confront. Lastly, this presentation will explore an exhibit project that interpreted the African American experience at a historic house museum in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In conclusion, Martin will offer guidance and advice for history professionals wishing to integrate oral sources in exhibitions in a meaningful and successful manner.

Martha Norkunas

### **Racial Consciousness: Narrating Awareness**

Since 2004 Martha Norkunas has been working with graduate and honors undergraduate students to co-create life histories with African Americans in Texas and Tennessee. The collection comprises over 125 narrators, 600 hours of digital audio and video, and thousands of pages of transcript. In this paper Norkunas looks at how narrators describe the development of their racial consciousness. They speak of epiphanic moments or a gradual awareness that the national Civil Rights Movement could have local implications. Some disclaim participation in the Civil Rights Movement because they did not attend sit-ins or protest rallies, but go on to describe a deep emotional commitment to the ideals of the Movement. Others speak of small acts of courage on the part of their parents that, in retrospect, inflected their own sense of themselves as an actor in the effort to create racial equality in America. One woman remembered her father asking her to be among the first African Americans to attend a formerly all-White high school; another spoke of her grandmother refusing to obey customary segregation practices; a man located his initiation into the Civil Rights Movement in high school when he was suspended for using the “B” word although a White female student was not punished for using the “N” word. Some narrators realized that race was critically important to their lives as teenagers; for others the awareness of who they were and how racism impacted them developed over a period of years. Norkunas also reflects on the development of racial consciousness in the interviewees, many of whom were of European descent. How do young professionals address issues of race in the interviews when they feel unable to articulate their own racial consciousness? Are there moments of transformation in the interviews for both narrator and interviewer?

Mandi Pitt

### **Interpreting Narratives of Race, Class and Gender in Public Programming**

This presentation examines how oral histories can be used in conjunction with research and historic images to develop public programming for historic organizations. The presenter discusses and introduces her foray into public programming through creating both a SoundSlide and radio show, which combined oral histories and historic interpretation. The programs were constructed using life histories from Dr. Martha Norkunas’s body of work co-created with African-Americans in Texas and in Tennessee. Interpretation manifested itself not only in interpretive voiceovers, but also in selection of images to correspond with the oral history audio. The SoundSlide show, entitled “Black Urban Experience in Two Iconic Southern Cities,” examines the experiences of two African-American Southern women in two cities, Nashville and Austin. In these excerpts, the women discuss what it was like to live in segregated Nashville and segregated Austin, implicit and explicit racism, and how urban redevelopment has impacted black neighborhoods and race relations in these two cities. The radio show, “Class, Identity, and Dress: Experiences of African-American Women in Austin, Texas,” attempts to highlight some of the perceived psychological effects of class and race on female identity. In presenting these modest pieces of work, the presenter hopes to spark dialogue about the triple responsibility to narrator, the historical record, and self in using often-sensitive material from life histories to create programs to engage a public audience.

## Session 1.9 ROUNDTABLE: Publishing and Editing Oral History

Bruce Stave

### ROUNDTABLE: PUBLISHING & EDITING ORAL HISTORY

Five experienced editors will discuss book and journal publishing and editing of oral history. OHR editor Kim Porter will reflect on the *Review's* publication trends in terms of subject matter, nations of origin, technology, desired future content, and what requirements a potential author can expect. Kathy Nasstrom of the Oxford

series will address the theme of the challenges and difficulties authors face in writing effectively about the subject content of their scholarship and also its nature as oral history. She will address the nature of memory and its relationship of past to present; the importance of narrative form; and the intersubjectivity of oral history material. Don Ritchie will talk about his experiences as editor of the Twayne series from 1990 to 2000, which produced 26 titles. His remarks will focus on the difficulties many interviewers encountered when trying to turn their oral histories into book manuscripts, and the strategies employed to overcome obstacles. He also will reveal the different ways in which the interviews were organized and edited, and the reaction of reviewers to the various formats. Linda Shopes of the Palgrave series will consider how “oral history does not speak for itself,” that editing for publication is an act of translating one medium of communication into another, and that this act of translation requires attention to text, context and meaning. She also will address the quality of writing demanded for publication, and the need for triangulation of sources. Bruce Stave, Palgrave series co-general editor, will serve as moderator and discussant.

## Session 2.1 Difficult Dialogues: Universities and Communities

Veronica Holmes

### How An Oral Historian Impacts A Community’s History

Oral historians are usually cautioned about possible exploitation of respondents when conducting an oral history project, especially of an underclass or minority community. The fear is that the historian will use the community to establish or further his or her intellectual career, while respondents generally get very little from the exercise. This is most likely the case, and is inevitable to a certain extent, since the historian usually withdraws after the thesis or dissertation has been completed, or the book published. There is usually very little or no longitudinal follow-up, and thus there is no serious evaluation of the impact that the historian has made on the community’s actors and the ways in which they re-imagine themselves because of the project. My research indicates that a long-term engagement with a community and its respondents enables an evaluation of the impact the oral historian has on a community, which could add a rich and deeper dimension to oral history projects. In my case, the six-year engagement with an African American underclass community has been positive. I have become an actor in the community’s affairs and future, and this on-going relationship has made various members of the community imagine themselves differently, which has enabled several of them to pursue new options for their future.

Agnes Scott College is a small liberal arts college for women in Decatur, Ga. In 2009, the college launched an oral history program called Agnes Scott Voices. This program has several goals, one of which is to increase alumnae engagement with the college resulting in increased monetary support. Like most nonprofit educational institutions, the college relies on donor support for a significant portion of its operating budget, and much of the donor pool is made up of alumnae. Many an alumna who gives cites fond memories of her college experience as the reason she supports the college. Conversely, the most common issues cited by alumnae choosing not to give are *bad* memories associated with the college and dissatisfaction with current college culture (e.g., the college no longer matches their memories of student life).

In the case of fundraising, memory and the perception of change, for better or worse, are the most important factors for success. In order to better manage relationships with alumnae donors and other stakeholders, the college needs to understand the relationship between personal memory and propensity to support the institution through financial gifts. Through oral history interviews with narrators participating the Agnes Scott oral history project, I will show how institutions can use individuals own memories to tailor programs and appeals for support to those individuals’ concerns and interest.

Material gathered in institutional history interviews can be used by college staff for events and promotional materials such as magazine articles and marketing materials, which translates into financial gifts. Assessment metrics for the Agnes Scott Voices and similar college projects will also be explored and evaluated in this paper, as a case study for advancement offices planning to use oral history as a tool to engage with alumni donors.

Andrew Urban

### A Day in the Life of an Emory Worker: Oral History and Labor on Campus

This paper stems from my experience working as a Community Research Postdoctoral Fellow with the Transforming Community Project (TCP) at Emory University. The TCP was founded in 2005 and is an interdisciplinary group of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to examining the history of race at Emory and in Atlanta, and using that history to facilitate dialogues on how race continues to inform campus life in the present. For the TCP, I am presently organizing an oral history project and exhibit with Emory’s Campus Services unit, where staff members will have their opportunity to impart their perspectives on race, labor, and what it means for them to be part of the Emory “community.” The Campus Services unit is responsible for the upkeep of Emory’s facilities – its dormitories, academic buildings, and laboratories – as well as for the maintenance of the University’s landscape and grounds. Historically, Campus

Services has been staffed primarily by African American men and women, although in recent years an increased number of recent immigrants have also joined the workforce. Race has been a major factor informing the relationship between Campus Services and the predominantly white faculty and student body at Emory.

This paper will explore what campus workers stand to gain from learning oral history research methodologies, and using those skills to conduct their own oral history projects. Oral histories offer campus workers a unique opportunity to examine the “unofficial” history of race and labor at Emory. While stories of racial discrimination, impeded promotions, and verbal abuse from students and faculty have consistently circulated among campus workers, little has been done in documenting the larger patterns that structure relations between Emory’s staff and the rest of the University. A major aim of this project – and a focus of the accompanying paper – will be to use oral history to think critically about the discourse of community that Emory’s administration promotes. In its Human Resources’ materials, Campus Services is depicted as an integral and equal member of the Emory community. In addition, this paper will also investigate how oral histories and the sharing of worker experiences can encourage collective action among members of Campus Services.

Finally, this paper will examine how Campus Services’ oral histories can be presented and disseminated through a multimedia exhibition. Alongside the presentation of oral histories in an exhibit setting, campus workers will also work with a photographer to document visually what a “day in the life” of an Emory staff member looks like. In its conclusion, this paper will attempt to address how oral histories of labor in a university setting can be most effectively used for challenging the marginal way in which campus workers are often represented.

Julia Stover

#### **In Support of Memory: Using Oral History to Engage Reluctant Donors**

Agnes Scott College is a small liberal arts college for women in Decatur, Ga. In 2009, the college launched an oral history program called Agnes Scott Voices. This program has several goals, one of which is to increase alumnae engagement with the college resulting in increased monetary support. Like most nonprofit educational institutions, the college relies on donor support for a significant portion of its operating budget, and much of the donor pool is made up of alumnae. Many an alumna who gives cites fond memories of her college experience as the reason she supports the college. Conversely, the most common issues cited by alumnae choosing not to give are *bad* memories associated with the college and dissatisfaction with current college culture (e.g., the college no longer matches their memories of student life).

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#### **Session 2.2      Boundaries, Barriers, and Borders: Oral Histories and the Question of Difference**

Erin Anderson

#### **Local Lives, Global Voices: Oral Histories of International Street Paper Vendors**

Beginning in earnest in the early 1990s, the modern “street paper” concept emerged as a novel response to rising rates of urban homelessness in North America and Western Europe, providing low-threshold employment and social opportunity to homeless and economically marginalized “vendors” who sell independent newspapers and magazines to the reading public on street corners. Over the past two decades, the idea has exploded into a widespread global phenomenon, with an organized association of over 100 street papers across 38 countries on six continents. As the movement has spread, the street paper model has been creatively re-imagined and adapted to the diverse contexts of new global cities and regions. In the midst of this multiplicity, street paper vendors remain the one unequivocal commonality that unites these publications, as both their characteristic distribution model and their reason for being. Taking this convergence as a point of departure, this paper analyzes the function and meaning of global street papers through the lived experience of their vendors. Drawing upon oral history methodology, it brings together the life narratives of two vendors in Seattle, Washington and Cape Town, South Africa, exploring the ways in which these individuals make meaning of their personal histories, shared struggles and shifting identities in the context of their involvement with local street papers. Despite the vastly divergent realities of these two contexts, this paper finds remarkable congruity between these individuals’ personal backgrounds as well as the ways they draw upon their participation for practical survival, personal development, and urban placemaking. Ultimately, it argues that the divisions between global street papers may be less significant than the fundamental commonality that binds them together—the experience of their vendors—and suggests the need for further research into everyday acts of agency practiced by vendors within the distinct constraints of diverse international contexts.

Lisa Krissoff Boehm

### **Interviewing Across Boundaries: Race, Class, Gender, Age, and Ability as Factors in Oral History Research**

Professor Lisa Krissoff Boehm published *Making a Way out of No Way: African American Women and the Second Great Migration* (Mississippi) in 2009 after seven years of field work. As an oral history consultant for the New England area, as well as the North East Regional Director of the Consortium of Oral History Educators and a board member of the New England Oral History Association, she has helped many area groups and institutions of higher education learn the best practices of oral history.

Traditionally, oral historians have feared that when oral history interviewers attempt to cross boundaries, whether they consist of age, physical difference (aka disability/ability), race, gender, or economics, the interview may be compromised or at least changed in some way. Krissoff Boehm will discuss her thoughts about the age and racial differences that may be seen as separating her from the narrators featured in *Making a Way out of No Way*. She has been fascinated by the fact that her identity as a “white” woman has been the point of discussion at book readings across the country. The author here will reflect on how age and racial differences did play a role in the finished product of the interviews, in both positive and negative ways. She will also offer suggestions for mitigating the effects of difference, and also utilizing difference in ways that can enhance the outcome of the oral history. Finally, she would like to offer suggestions for a discussion with the panelists and the audience. Krissoff Boehm would like to edit a collection of reflections on conducting oral histories in the face of difference—an anthology which would include her two fellow panel presenters--and would like to discuss aspects of this proposed volume with the group.

Judy Freedman Fask

### **Crossing Communication and Cultural Boundaries...Signed History Project**

*"So I try to respect Deaf culture and also at the same time respect Hearing culture. I feel like I'm stuck in the middle between my hearing family and all my Deaf friends. It's really tough for me to find a balance. For example, sometimes I have a hard time identifying myself. I can talk. Am I hard of hearing? I can sign. Am I deaf? I don't know who I am."* (Young adult)

This remark was expressed in American Sign Language (ASL) during a signed interview with students from Holy Cross. Little do students realize that taking one initial language class in American Sign Language (ASL) might lead them directly into the heart of the Deaf community, a world they did not even know existed. One of the unique aspects of the Deaf Studies program at Holy Cross is an immersion into the “Deaf World”—a community of individuals who do not see themselves as disabled, but as proud members of a cultural and linguistic minority.

This presentation addresses the unique and groundbreaking collaboration that three institutions of higher education (The College of the Holy Cross, Northeastern University, Salter College) collectively created with the Worcester Women’s History (WWHP) project to provide students with a remarkable and authentic learning opportunity. Through personal interviews with Deaf women, students in the advanced ASL classes learn more about specific themes of work, education, health and politics from a “Deaf World” view. Students see the importance of cultural and linguistic influences within this population. Instructors gain awareness of the challenges for the students preparing and conducting the actual interviews using ASL as second language learners. In the end, however, we see tremendous benefits, not only to the students, but also to the Deaf women sharing their stories and their contributions to the community.

### **Session 2.3      BOOK SPOTLIGHT: Developing a Multi-Interview Edited Collection**

This session will consider the issues involved in developing multi-interview edited collections for the Palgrave Studies in Oral History series. Laurie Mercier, co-editor with Sue Armitage for *Speaking History: Oral Histories of the American Past, 1865-Present*, and Jehanne Gheith and Katherine Jolluck, co-editors of *Voices from the Gulag*, will discuss: the genesis of their books; their roles in creating the volumes; challenges in obtaining suitable materials and special problems they faced; the sources used; the issue of veracity; how they gauged the veracity of accounts; whether they triangulated their sources; the incorporation of non-oral history documents; relations with the publisher and general editors; editorial decisions and editing practices; what they would do differently, if anything, and reaction to the volume. Bruce Stave, co-general editor with Linda Shope of the Palgrave series, will serve as Chair and Commentator.

Clare Oh

### **Mental Illness and Narrative Crisis: Re-storying through Oral History**

Through the oral histories of seven people in New York City, Ms. Oh explores how the many dimensions of living with mental illness can cause ongoing narrative trauma for the individual. Mental illness in Western society is loaded with meaning, often negative, stigmatized and misunderstood. People living with a serious mood disorder must contend on a daily basis with a litany of effects: the symptoms of the illness itself, the invasive side effects of medication, stigma and discrimination, and disrupted relationships, to name a few. These effects can lead to an ongoing internal conflict, leading to a sense of loss of one's own narrative agency. Perhaps, more importantly, the struggle to create a life narrative that coheres to normative social narratives compounds this sense of loss. Ms. Oh argues that this struggle can lead to traumatic interruptions of a personal narrative: The loss of agency, it can be argued, can lead to a narrative crisis, whereby the individual feels powerless in creating his or her own life narrative.

Ms. Oh will discuss three fundamental challenges posed by mental illness to the life narrative: the challenge to narrative agency (illness vs. self), the struggle to author a narrative that fits into the narrow canon of "acceptable" social narratives, and the challenge to find other means for creating a personal narrative. Finally, she will discuss the use of oral history as a way for people to "re-story" their lives and aid in the creation of a life narrative.

#### Session 2.4      ROUNDTABLE: Contested Terrain: Oral History, Environmental History, and the Commons

Debbie Lee

##### **Wilderness and Radicalism: The Selway/Bitterroot Wilderness**

The post-contact history of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness of Idaho and Montana, the third largest wildland in the contiguous U.S., suggests that the area was a magnet for people who did not "fit" mainstream culture. In collecting and analyzing the oral histories of the Selway-Bitterroot within its revisionist history, I discovered a strain of "radicalism" in the individuals who lived on the land, protected it, and gave it meaning. My paper will raise questions about what kinds of people attach themselves to wild landscapes and how the oral histories of these landscapes come to define our notion of "wild."

Kathy Newfont

##### **The Appalachian Forest Commons: History, Culture, and Politics in the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests**

The forests of the southern Appalachian mountains have for centuries served as a commons harvest ground for peoples inhabiting the region. These woods, the most biologically diverse temperate forests on earth, host a dazzling array of plants and animals. Their riches have long been and continue to be central to the region's economies and cultures. Western North Carolina's Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, now nearly 100 years old, encompass more than a million acres of this rich forest. These holdings make the U.S. Forest Service the largest landholder in the region, and a key player in its politics, economy, and culture. The Forest Service began acquiring lands in the southern Appalachians after passage of the 1911 Weeks Act authorized the federal government to purchase Eastern lands. Along with its purchases, the Service inherited a complex matrix of history, culture, and politics centered on the forest commons. Oral histories with national forest neighbors, users, activists, and Forest Service personnel shed light on the history and ongoing importance of this commons, and underscore the challenges of stewarding both the forest itself and the rich history it has engendered.

Hannah Nyala West

##### **Narrating a Contested Land: Dispatches from Joshua Tree, 1966-2010**

When President Roosevelt set aside the lands of Joshua Tree National Monument in 1936, a wide range of people were directly affected: Chemehuevi, Serrano, Cahuilla, and Mojave Indians, miners, ranchers, homesteaders, neighboring community residents, and tourists. Land use patterns immediately shifted, and NPS staff soon began interpreting these patterns for visitors. By the mid-'80s, an established narrative had emerged in which native peoples were relegated to the prehistoric period while iconic mining, ranching, and homesteading individuals occupied historical center stage. The US western "frontier" served as the most common lens through which human experience was understood, and, unsurprisingly, two key historical figures quickly dominated the monument's story. Although oral histories were collected intermittently from 1966 to 1995, their more complicated accounts did not reshape standard storylines and, when the area was designated a national park in 1994, these bifurcated and heroic narratives continued. In late 2009, park staff hired a historian to expand and professionalize the oral history project. Using a case study from *Desert Voices*, the Joshua Tree Oral History Project, this paper will explore the paradoxes inherent in collecting and re-narrating cultural memories and practices on contested commons, the perils of treating such evidence as anecdotal, and the value of these methods and materials for environmental and public history.

#### Session 2.6      Paradigm Shifts in Scientific Knowledge and Practice: Using "The Truth" to Settle Scientific Debates

Sarah Hunter

##### **A Call to Arms: Making Scientists into Home-front Warriors and its Legacy in Scientific Communities**

On the American home front during World War II, citizens were encouraged to support the war effort in every way possible, for example, ration, mend clothing, and/or work for industries with wartime labor shortages. The United States also called upon scientists to provide their expertise to help win the war. For many people, science in World War II is often synonymous with the atomic bomb. But the crisis of war accelerated a much wider range of scientific research and discovery, as government, academia, and industry all worked urgently and cooperatively to propel the war effort. Scientific research flourished as the government began funding desperately needed research. Various industrial, academic, and military scientists researched vaccines for everything from malaria to influenza. Ballistics research, polymers (including a new synthetic rubber) and chemical warfare became top military and scientific priorities. Science and scientists were mobilized during World War II.

Many of these wartime scientists—whether new Ph.D.s or leaders in their fields—have been interviewed by the Chemical Heritage Foundation. These oral histories speak to both the rapid advancement and the diversity of the science being practiced during this period. The set of interviews can also be utilized to explore how a wide range of science operated during the war.

This paper will explore how these oral histories illuminate this period of science even further: personal recollections focus on collaborative efforts, changes in industrial research and development, the government's role in wartime science, and, obviously, the

science itself. The oral histories also explore a broad narrative of wartime science and its implications, including the United States' new status as a scientific research leader and the government's continuing role in funding science. Additionally, these oral histories, because of their focus on the subject's entire career, also reveal how these wartime scientists continued their careers postwar, demonstrating that the wartime boom in research had long-lasting effects on scientific research.

Jessica Roseberry

#### **Paradigm Shifts and the Physician's Assistant Concept**

The physician assistant program began at Duke Medical Center as a response to a health manpower crisis in the 1960s. Its founder, Duke Department of Medicine chair Dr. Eugene Stead, envisioned a new paradigm within the health profession that would serve as a first-line response to health needs in both established medical settings and in underserved areas that lacked adequate medical care. This paper will look at oral history interviews with Dr. Stead as well as interviews with early participants in the program, including directors, students, and those who helped integrate the program. In doing so it will not only outline the reasons for creating a new medical model, but it will also discuss crises associated with shaping such an experiment. For example, licensure of PAs progressed state by state, and left some early practitioners struggling to assert their legitimacy as deliverers of adequate care. The paper will also explore some of the paradigm shifts within the profession itself over time. For example, the beginnings of the program represented a departure from the existing model of the four-year medical college experience dominated by white males. Although initially aimed at nurses, the first participants in the two-year classes were military corpsmen with hands-on healthcare training, and the profession is now dominated by women and geared toward masters students.

Hilary Domush

#### **Women's Professional Networks: Title IX and Chemistry**

My paper looks at the contemporary history of women in chemistry, exploring the impact of the availability-or non-availability-of women's networks and assessing whether or not these networks were crucial to an individual's success. While success should only be defined on a personal basis, the women interviewed for the Women in Chemistry Oral History project at the Chemical Heritage Foundation have all unquestionably attained it. They have earned tenured positions, received prestigious fellowships and awards, provided expert testimony before the United States Congress, and been personally recommended by their peers as exemplars of success. Success resonates differently with each individual and in the course of the oral histories women reflected on their personal successes as well as the trials and tribulations they faced. How did these women, often the sole women in their respective departments fighting marginalization and professional insecurity, travel from chemistry student to their current positions within academia, industry, and government? Did they do so alone or with the help and support of women's networks?

These Women in Chemistry oral histories provide an in-depth discussion of the origins of interviewees' interest and education in science, any obstacles they may have faced, influential figures and inspirational moments in their lives, and the ways in which these experiences have shaped their careers. These discussions examine issues that affect the careers of women in chemistry such as resource allocation, the professional reward structure, and marginalization. Using these oral histories, I compare the stories and experiences of women who entered the chemical workforce after the enactment of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. As professional opportunities did not abound, female chemists were slow to enter the ranks of the male dominated world of chemistry. Learning whether or not professional networks existed or were sought out by the interviewee allows for an understanding of how the interviewee coped with the difficult situations arising from a slowly shifting career environment fraught with biases. I will explore how pivotal women's social and professional networks have been in helping female chemists navigate a traditionally male dominated field. Providing such insight into the recent history of chemistry will shed light on the larger social and cultural issues women face a generation after the Women's Movement, as well as on the workings of modern science.

### **Session 2.7      Oral History and Recovery**

Maureen Mullinax

#### **Better You Take My Devil Lord": Confronting Community Shame around "Hillbilly Heroine" through Oral History and Performance**

Communities in the coalfield region of eastern Kentucky have long faced intense social challenges including exploitative conditions in the mines and persistently high rates of poverty. In Harlan County the destruction of the mountains through mountaintop removal mining has led to severe environmental impacts and the loss of natural beauty that has shaped the lives of generations. With coal as the coveted resource for the global economy, residents sense that policymakers see the area as a national sacrifice zone.

By 2000 many saw a growing problem with the abuse of the prescription painkiller OxyContin, dubbed "hillbilly heroine" by the national media, as the most recent expression of the lack of belief in their resilience. Residents began to deal with the addictions of their friends and family members in a community context where most people are familiar with each other or with family reputations and where there are few rehabilitative services.

One response to the problem has been an intensive community arts process that uses oral history for building community self-knowledge. Participants recorded over 400 oral histories with a wide range of community residents. Their goal was to take an "inventory" of the county asking questions about both the positive and the challenging aspects of their place, including the drug

problem. Working with a professional playwright, the group then scripted and performed community performances based on these oral histories.

I focus on how the careful, public foregrounding of common addiction stories helped to dissolve the shamefulness of this issue. The dialogic character of the interview process between project participants and residents whose addiction stories are documented is especially poignant. The outing of these shared stories and the control of their representation is highly significant for eastern Kentuckians who have long been maligned as backward or violent in the popular representational landscape.

Shruti Varadharajan

#### **Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Transformational Leader in Paralyzing Times**

In the early twentieth century, outbreaks of poliomyelitis triggered immense fear in America. Thousands would die and many more would be crippled for the rest of their lives. Franklin Delano Roosevelt contracted polio in 1921, leaving him permanently paralyzed from the waist down and confined to braces and a wheel chair. After several treatment procedures, in 1924 Roosevelt visited a thermal spa in Warm Springs, Georgia, hoping to find a cure. For the first time in three years, he was able to move his right leg. He discovered the healing benefits of the spring water and devoted himself to developing a unique rehabilitation center for other polio patients. Later with his unique leadership skills, he mobilized the whole nation to fight this disease through charity campaigns like March of Dimes. His unprecedented efforts in combating this deadly disease led to the invention of the vaccine and today the disease is close to being eradicated from the world. Many historians believe Roosevelt's creative leadership in building the rehabilitation center at Warm Springs, GA, was critical to his emergence as a political leader without peer in the twentieth century. FDR himself also claimed that his observations in the Warm Springs area inspired certain New Deal programs. FDR played an important role in changing the history of polio in America and the entire world. His extraordinary skills permitted him to spearhead the polio crusade. Furthermore the whole approach has set a prototype for prevention and cure of other deadly diseases. This is truly is Roosevelt's supreme legacy.

The documentary Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Transformational Leader in Paralyzing Times is a collection of interviews from people who were with FDR at the rehabilitation center and those who are preserving his legacy today at Warm Springs. It offers a dramatic testimony of FDR's stand to fight polio, the oppositions he faced and the ultimate triumph over the disease.

Crystal Baik

#### **Oral History, Agency and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)**

Through her research, Ms. Baik explores the nuances of the everyday by using oral history to document narratives of intimate partner violence (IPV). In her paper, Ms. Baik discusses her use of oral history to articulate the experiences of five women impacted by IPV. In essence, experiences of intimate violence are not "extraordinary" events, which exist beyond the everyday; rather, interviewees describe such experiences within the context of normalized, socio-cultural dynamics. Consequently, the oral history becomes a reflexive and poignant means for interviewees to locate and situate IPV within the fabric of their daily lives, rather than interpreting IPV as an "othering" phenomena. Ms. Baik also distinguishes the use of oral history from other modes of interviewing, particularly in reference to social work intakes, court testimonials and media-based interviews. Lastly, Ms. Baik uses oral history as a means to frame her work within a more critical interpretation of "trauma": what assumptions and risks are attached to using "trauma" within IPV research, and how might it be useful to frame "trauma" beyond the borders of psychic wound?

### **Session 2.9      Ethical Dilemmas Undercover**

Julie Meranze Levitt

#### **Clips: When Use of Snippets of an Oral History Creates Ethical Problems**

Julie Levitt confronts problems of excerpting "clips" or brief parts of an oral history interview to use as a teaching tool or to place on the web.. Use of clips is a continuation of a longstanding professional dilemma in the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology and history, among other disciplines. Oral history is inevitably drawn into these debates about usefulness, appropriateness, accuracy, and privacy when primary sources, undisguised, are shared with an audience. Levitt considers the question: "When using clips, what precautions need to be taken to avoid misrepresentation of the narrator's intent or invasion of the narrator's privacy?" In addition she explores the use of clips for the public viewer and for the researcher—looking at the issues that go into decision-making when the audience's purpose and the researcher's purpose are different. As part of this discussion, she draws from examples to evaluate the appropriateness of clips for different audiences.

### **Session 4.3      Oral History and the Impact on the Public**

Stephen Fagin

#### **Understanding Tragedy: Oral History in the Museum Setting**

Soon after guests step onto the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository building in Dallas, Texas, they encounter a poignant quote from President John F. Kennedy: "History, after all, is the memory of a nation." Recognizing the extraordinary impact that the Kennedy assassination had on the nation and the world, The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza has captured personal reflections of this tragedy and its aftermath for more than two decades. However, now separated nearly half a century from the events of 1963, the museum has broadened its focus to contextualize the event and provide insight into the history and culture of the community and the 1960s. Ever expanding, this collection of "living history" now includes more than 700 diverse recollections from

around the world from eyewitnesses, law enforcement, and news media to researchers, 1960s schoolchildren, and civil rights and social activists.

Rather than let these unique primary resources gather dust, the museum has experimented with a variety of methods to utilize this growing Oral History Collection to help those not alive in 1963 better understand the assassination and make connections to historical events in their own lifetimes. This presentation will explore multimedia highlights of museum installations, video presentations, public and educational programs, interactive workshops, social media features, and provide a glimpse inside the new Reading Room space which provides direct access to library and collections resources in a reflective environment overlooking Dealey Plaza.

The Sixth Floor Museum recognizes the significance of firsthand recollections in providing future generations with a tangible and meaningful link to the past. Feedback will be encouraged as the museum continues to share its collection of firsthand accounts to provide meaningful relevance in new and innovative ways—both online and within the museum setting—in the years ahead.

Charles Philips and Vickie Renna

#### **“The Fabric of Life”: Oral History and Historic Roadways**

Since World War II, Florida's landscape changes largely bypassed rural St. Johns County, located south of Jacksonville and home to St. Augustine. Despite the city's tourist draw the eastern and western fringes of the county did not share its growth. In the mid 1980s, a Duval County based building boom spilled over to St. Johns County and threatened the northwestern rural landscape with its small citrus groves, farms, ranches and fish camps along the St. Johns River and the quiet, seasonal homes and communities that made up the beach front.

In 2008, St. Johns County planner, Vickie Renna and Cultural Resources Officer Robin Moore hired Brockington and Associates to collect, transcribe, and publish a digitalized collection of audio and video interviews related to two historic roadways in the county: A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, on the ocean front and the William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway along the St. Johns River. Copies of the interviews were placed in the local libraries for public use.

This presentation will examine not only the results of the audio and video interviews and how local county management played a critical role in finding funding and keeping momentum for the projects. The presenters will cover the themes that emerged from the interviews as well as introduce the county's role in coordinating with both the National Scenic Byways Program as well as the individual state highway designation program.

The management of the project was a team approach. County officials aided the Corridor Management Entities in preparing the grant applications; managing the funding; selecting the contractor; and coordinating the interviews. They also aided in the development of the questionnaires; establishing an interviewee list; determining a permanent archiving source; keeping a focus on the roadway; and aiding the oral historian with several logistical obstacles. The project represented an innovative idea by linking oral history to the development of scenic and historic transportation routes.

Elaine Thomopoulos

#### **From Alpha to Omega: The Process of Collecting and Presenting the Stories of the Berrien County Michigan Greek Community**

Elaine Thomopoulos, the project director of “The Greeks of Berrien County,” will present the difficulties and the triumphs of creating this project, which included interviewing nearly 70 elderly Greek immigrants and their adult children. Public presentations, publications and an exhibit were based in part on the oral histories. The exhibit is now on permanent exhibit at the Annunciation and St. Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church in New Buffalo, Michigan.

The project explored the history and contributions of Greek immigrants who settled and vacationed in Berrien County. Berrien County is a rural county of 162,453 residents (2000 census) located about 100 miles from Chicago. The Greek population numbers 390.

Questions to be addressed in the presentation include: What problems did we face, and how did we overcome them? What was the specific involvement of the community institutions? How did we locate our interviewees? How did we recruit and train our volunteer interviewers, who were mostly non-Greeks? Did it matter that the interviewers were not Greek? What planning and paperwork was involved, including release forms, biographical data sheets sent prior to the interview, and list of prospective questions that could be used by the interviewees? How did we determine what our focus would be and what questions to ask interviewees? How were the interviews used to gain access to other historical data, e.g., photographs, diaries, artifacts, and ephemera? How did we reach the general public (non-Greek as well as Greek)?

Working collaboratively on the project were the Berrien County Historical Association and the Annunciation and St. Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church. Erin McCarthy's oral history class at Columbia College Chicago conducted 21 interviews of the Greeks who vacationed in Berrien County. The project was funded in part by a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## **Session 4.4      Transforming Public History in the South Carolina Lowcountry Through Oral History**

Historic tourism narrowly focused on white elite lifestyles has long been a source of revenue in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Despite the tremendous history of slavery and multicultural identities in this area, the construction of these exclusive narratives on public history sites has traditionally silenced or marginalized more diverse representations of race and class. But in recent years, with changes in political climates, race relations, and research approaches, narrow public history narratives and spaces must also change. African American history and culture, particularly the Gullah/Geechee culture, has emerged as undeniably central to understanding Lowcountry history and identity. With the recent economic crisis, transforming these representations is not only essential for accuracy and diversity, but also for keeping the historic “brand” of the Lowcountry’s multi-billion dollar tourism industry relevant to contemporary tourists and vital for local economies. But how do public history sites and institutions effectively transform history and culture representations to not only provide more inclusive understandings of Lowcountry history, but also to productively engage the diverse needs, resources, and identities of local communities? Increasingly public historians and researchers have found that one of the most effective ways to confront these complex questions is to *ask*. This panel will address how through interviews and public forums, oral history research has emerged as an essential resource for identifying and negotiating these transforming or emerging representations of history and culture in the South Carolina Lowcountry.

Michael Allen

### **Exploring the Soul of Gullah Geechee Culture through an innovative Public Engagement Process**

Designated by Congress in 2006, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor extends from Wilmington, North Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida, with Charleston, South Carolina as the Corridor’s central location. It is home to one of America’s most unique cultures, a tradition first shaped by captive Africans brought to the southern United States from West Africa and continued in later generations by their descendants. Michael Allen, a Gullah descendant is employed by the National Park Service and currently serves as the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Coordinator, tasked with providing technical, planning and limited financial assistance to National Heritage Areas. Rather than own or directly manage the land, the Park Service acts as a partner and advisor, leaving ultimate

decision-making authority in the hands of local people and organizations. Residents are empowered to not only participate in, but also direct large-scale preservation projects.

In early 2009, Allen and the Gullah Geechee Commission, embarked on conducting a series of twenty-one public meetings for the development of a management plan for the Corridor. These public meetings, which are held throughout the corridor, provided an opportunity for local residents to convey not only their concerns and hopes for the development of the Corridor, but also to describe their own family histories and connections to Gullah/Geechee culture, identity, and spaces. The meetings are filmed and transcriptions are posted on the Corridor’s website to serve as an oral history archive for future researchers. For any preservation effort to be successful, local organizations and communities needed to be involved in decisions about how resources located in their communities would be handled. Allen’s presentation will discuss how he and the Commission organized these meetings and the insights they have provided, as well as their future role in the development of the Corridor.

Mary Battle

### **Discussions on the Grounds: Transforming Public History Narratives in and around Charleston**

Mary Battle’s presentation addresses how broader shifts in representations of race, class and the history of slavery in the South Carolina Lowcountry occur on specific historic tourism sites, particularly in the Charleston area. Who are the interpreters that shape the content and meaning of these emerging representations or narratives? What institutional structures and market influences do they negotiate not only to address these once silenced histories, but also to craft them into tours that often cross paths or share spaces and resources with more traditional representations of white elite leisure? Can these public history sites present cohesive multicultural interpretations or must white elite and African American histories be compartmentalized as separate items on a site’s tour menu? To explore these individual and site-specific experiences and challenges Battle draws from film and audio clips of interviews that she conducted with staff on various historic tourism sites in the South Carolina Lowcountry from 2007 to 2009. Battle’s research provides insight into the complex relationships between history, cultural identities and economic challenges in tourism representations, and considers the strategy of inter-site dialogue these historic interpreters describe using, and how it could be further developed as a resource to help transform representations of African American history and culture not only on specific sites, but also throughout the Charleston area.

Herb Frazier

### **Behind God’s Back: Gullah Memories of Cainhoy, Huger, Wando, St. Thomas and Daniel islands, South Carolina.**

Herb Frazier will present on his upcoming book, “*Behind God’s Back*,” a compilation of the experiences of Gullah people who struggled after Emancipation, through the Depression and into the middle of the twentieth century to maintain their African-based lifestyles in rural communities near Charleston, South Carolina. The stories in “*Behind God’s Back*,” never collected until now, come from whites and blacks who live in the communities of Cainhoy, Wando, Huger, and St. Thomas and Daniel islands. Their recollections reveal the interaction between African-Americans and whites, a relationship that has been interspersed with conflict and

violence. The most notable example is the Cainhoy gunfight of 1876 when black Republicans stood their ground during a political rally to achieve a rare victory against white Democrats in the violent period of Reconstruction. Some of Frazier's research is featured in "*Word, Shout, Song: Lorenzo Dow Turner Connecting Communities through Languages*," an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Community Museum in Washington, D.C. Frazier uncovered a little-known visit that Turner made in 1933 near Huger to conduct his language research into the Gullah language. The Coastal Community Foundation in Charleston contracted with Frazier to write a history of the area because of concerned that a surge of residential and commercial development in the area following the 1992 completion of the Mark Clark Expressway (Interstate -526) would forever alter the area's rural character. The rise in development in the once-isolated communities presented a need to document the area's history through oral history.

Cari Goetcheus

### **Oral History, Defining and Understanding Place: Interpreting Cultural Landscapes of African American Communities in greater Mount Pleasant, SC**

The greater Mount Pleasant area outside Charleston, South Carolina has long been known as the 'epicenter' of a basketmaking tradition that harkens back to the slave trade of the 1700s. As the only location in the United States with this heritage, over the past 50 years researchers have investigated associated topics ranging from African origins of the basket-making craft and its transfer to the South Atlantic coast, to connections between basket-making traditions and the cultivation of rice on plantations, to the ecology of and prospects for cultivating sweetgrass and associated basketmaking resources, to documenting the political, social, and economic impacts of suburban development on basket makers and their communities. However, study of the physical and social fibers of these century old communities has not occurred to any depth. Recognized as a vital historic and cultural tradition that greatly adds to the Charleston heritage tourism industry, a study of ten historic African-American communities was undertaken to identify buildings, structures, and sites as well as natural environments of historic significance to communities associated with basket-making. One of the key research tools – oral history interviews - was used to understand these "places" greatly broadening the story beyond the tangible elements in the landscape. Over 25 oral histories, coupled with community tours and survey work, archival repository research and development of a GIS database, reveal the rich history and critical role these communities played and continue to play in the culture and economy of the Low Country.

### **Session 4.5      "There's got to be a better life": Merging Oral History and Documentary Film to Tell a Story of Family Aspiration**

Jessica Wiederhorn and Melanie Shorin

#### **"There's Got to Be a Better Life": Merging Oral History and Documentary Film to Tell a Story of Family Aspiration**

There's Got to Be a Better Life is a 90-minute video created from 30 hours of videotaped interviews with seven members of one family, most living in and around Atlanta. The video tells a story about a family descended on both sides from African slaves. Raised in poverty by illiterate relatives, both parents hold BAs. The father earned his JD while continuing to work full time. The mother graduated from college with her youngest son. Another son who sits on Obama's Presidential Economic Recovery Advisory Board commissioned the project.

The family experienced firsthand many of the defining events of American history in the 20th and 21st Centuries, from the Jim Crow era to the Presidential primaries of 2008 and the anticipated candidacy of Barak Obama. Historically pertinent, the video is an exemplar of how videotaped interviews can create a genre of non-fiction filmmaking that merges documentary film with traditional oral history.

We will screen segments of the video and discuss the challenges of staying true to the client as well as the oral history endeavor, discovering the essence of the story, and turning thirty hours of oral history into a 90 minute video. Family members will participate with us in a dialogue about their responses to the interviewing process, the transcripts and the edited video.

### **Session 4.7      Immigrant Lives**

Andrew Huse

#### **Crisis in a Family Business: The Columbia Restaurant**

In the 1990s, Florida's oldest eatery, the family-owned Columbia Restaurant, was world famous for food and entertainment. A death in the family shook the business and family to their foundations, nearly ruining both. While documenting the restaurant's history for a book (*The Columbia Restaurant: Celebrating a Century of History, Culture, and Cuisine*, University Press of Florida, 2009), a series of oral history interviews with family and staff revealed a hidden crisis never revealed to the public. The family's finances and debts were entangled with the restaurant's. Faulty, misleading accounting meant that the family did not know how much it owed or earned. The interviews reveal the process of loss, mourning, and recovery in the context of business and family. The imminent failure of the Columbia on the eve of its 100th anniversary culminated instead with an inspiring turnaround of the business and healing of the family.

Sharon Utakis and Nelson Reynoso

#### **Crisis and Immigration: Stories of Dominican Immigrants**

As of 2000, over a million Dominicans lived in the United States, with more than half a million in New York City alone. Dominicans in the United States play a crucial role in sustaining the Dominican Republic by sending remittances to family members, investing in

the Dominican Republic, and traveling back and forth on a regular basis. Like other immigrant groups, Dominicans have a variety of reasons for leaving their homeland. Dominican immigration has been transformed by political and economic changes both in the United States and in the Dominican Republic. Most Dominican immigration began after the assassination of Trujillo in 1961. The Trujillo dictatorship was followed by a period of political and economic instability. Those who were not politically connected had difficulty finding jobs, which meant that elections could lead to economic upheaval for many families. The 1980's were particularly difficult. By 1989, more than half of all families were living below the poverty level. The economy in the Dominican Republic continues to falter, while Dominicans arriving in the United States now may also experience difficult financial circumstances.

We examine the reasons for immigration given in oral history interviews by Dominican immigrants to New York City. The material we present was collected as part of the Dominican Oral History Project at Bronx Community College. We have collected life histories in English and Spanish from more than twenty-five Dominican immigrants in the New York City area. While many immigrants leave the Dominican Republic to rejoin family, we look at what prompted the initial immigration that started the chain of migration. The most common reasons are economic, often an economic crisis at the individual and family level. We will present stories of some of these individuals, looking at their personal reasons for immigration in relation to circumstances in the Dominican Republic.

#### **Session 4.8      Making Pictures Speak: Documentary Photography, Oral History, and Poor People**

Terry Easton

##### **“Documenting Workers: The Challenges of Representation, Appropriation, and Activism”**

In 2006 Terry Easton completed a dissertation entitled “Temporary Work, Contingent Lives: Race, Immigration, and Transformations of Atlanta’s Daily Work, Daily Pay.” In this research Easton examines the working lives of Atlanta’s day laborers from 1980 to 2006. During this period, Atlanta’s population increased, its economy grew, and the contingent labor market flourished. Latino, African American, and white men competed for day labor jobs at street corners, in temporary labor agencies, and at non-profit hiring halls. Easton documents transformations of Atlanta’s day labor industry and its workers through writing and photography. Initially seen as a supplement to the written word, the photographs later became an important visual component in his 2007 online essay “Geographies of Hope and Despair: Atlanta’s African American, Latino, and White Day Laborers.” In his presentation, Easton considers some ethical and practical questions oral history researchers face when they document workers across class, race, ethnic, and national boundaries.

Scott L. Matthews

##### **Mountain Voices, Mountain Faces: The Appalachian Photographs and Oral Histories of Shelby Lee Adams**

This paper examines the photographs and oral histories conducted by photographer Shelby Lee Adams in eastern Kentucky, the heart of the Appalachian coal fields, over the past twenty-five years. Adams’s photographs have elicited passionate and provocative reactions. Some praise his photography for its beauty, its brilliant use of lighting, and its ability to evoke the humanity of his subjects. Others see his photographs as exploitative, as images that prey upon impoverished Appalachian whites who have long endured stereotypes and caricatures that portray them as backward, as “hillbillies.” The media, particularly photographers and filmmakers, have played an important role in generating mythic images of Appalachia and its people and some critics fear Adams’s photographs perpetuate this tradition by posing his subjects in dramatic scenes that often emphasize their poverty or isolation from middle-class American life. In response to his critics, who range from *New York Times* writers to former coal miners, Adams began conducting oral histories of his photographic subjects to allow them to speak about what the photographs mean to them. In a tacit acknowledgement of the polarizing impact of his photography, Adams says he hopes his oral histories will attach new, more positive meanings to his images. For Adams, oral history offers a way to justify his work and counter or silence his critics. My paper will examine the dynamic between photography and oral history in Adams’s work and ask how oral history changes or does not change the meaning of a photograph as it circulates in books, magazines, web sites, and other media.

#### **Session 5.1      ROUNDTABLE: So, What Do You Do? (Part I)**

Douglas Lambert, Charles Hardy III and Mark Tebeau

We are excited to introduce a new presentation format for OHA 2010, borne out of discussions at the New Media Open Forum last year. “So, What Do You Do?” consists of two consecutive sessions, with rapid fire presentations in Part I (Session 5.1) followed by a series of round-table discussions in Part II (Session 6.1). Modeled after formats growing popular in tech and arts conferences like “Dork Shorts” at George Mason University’s “THATCamp”, or Pecha Kucha nights hosted in cities worldwide, the format allows attendees and participants to see what others are doing “at a glance” and connect like-minded people in an informative, fun, social mode of exchange. Presentations will focus primarily on innovative applications of technology to oral history all under the umbrella of this year’s focus *Human Stories on the Edge of Transformation*. The presentations format is intended to build on the Digital Showcase event held in Pittsburgh in 2008, as well the 2009 Louisville conference theme *Moving Beyond the Interview*.

Panelists will answer the question “So, What Do You Do?” in strictly timed 6-minute presentations. Questions and discussion will take place in the same room immediately following during the subsequent session (Session 6.1).

Caroline Daniels

This presentation will highlight the University of Louisville Oral History Center’s CONTENTdm-based oral history collection, which provides easy access to audio and transcripts for a growing number of oral histories. The focus will be on the solutions we found to the

problems and concerns many other organizations share. For example, we were concerned that our oral history materials should “play well” with our other primary source materials and not form another silo for users to search. While it was crucial that our materials be found by Google, we were also concerned about providing context. We also sought to balance the need for attention to legal issues such as copyright and defamation with the need for a streamlined workflow. Thus, interviews are included in their entirety, but are also proofread and evaluated for legal issues in their entirety. Our workflow includes creating a significant amount of descriptive metadata, much of which is gathered during the proofreading process. The result is a stable, easily-searched online collection of oral history interviews to which new interviews can readily be added. The system calls mainly upon skills such as metadata creation, which we have in abundance, rather than programming skills, which are more limited.

#### Erin Jessee

Erin Jessee is a PhD Candidate in the Interdisciplinary Humanities Doctoral Program at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her dissertation “Inscribed Intent: Genocidal Symbolic Violence and Social Death in the Aftermath of the Rwandan and Bosnian Genocides” draws upon the fields of oral history, ethnography, and the forensic sciences to determine how survivors, ex-combatants, and perpetrators of the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides make sense of the genocidal symbolic violence they experience in the aftermath of genocide. In addition, she works at the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) (<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/oralhistory/index.html>) as an embedded oral historian on the development of *Stories Matter* (<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/storiesmatter/>), an open-source database-building tool that provides oral historians with a practical and intuitive alternative to transcription. Her presentation at the OHA will offer a brief overview of *Stories Matter* as applied to her dissertation, and COHDS’ main project “Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide and Other Mass Human Rights Violations” (<http://www.lifestoriesmontreal.ca/>).

#### Andrew Huse, University of South Florida Oral History Program

University of South Florida Librarian Andrew Huse will discuss how the USF Libraries Oral History Program has used open source and/or inexpensive software solutions to develop tools to increase productivity and to enhance access to its collections. Examples include “Bull-OH-Base,” a locally developed project management tool; NCH Software’s Express Scribe for transcribing digital audio; Stairways software’s Keyboard Maestro to facilitate time coding; and Adobe Flash to create a oral history audio and transcript viewer. These technologies support access to oral history projects that encompass state and local history, environment studies, and Holocaust and genocide studies.

#### Susan McCormick, SUNY Albany, History & Documentary Studies

For some time Susan McCormick has been exploring how we use emerging digital technologies and new media to communicate history, particularly oral history, to a wide audience—and how we incorporate this into our scholarship.

She teaches in the Documentary Studies program and History Department at the University at Albany, SUNY, is a co-producer of *Talking History*, a weekly radio program aired live in the Capital region of New York and archived at [talkinghistory.org](http://talkinghistory.org), and was a founding co-editor of the *Journal for MultiMedia History*, an experimental, on-line, peer reviewed journal that was the first to explore how digital technology and new media might be used to produce and disseminate historical scholarship.

She is here today as a member of the editorial board of the *Oral History Review* to talk about the opportunities afforded by the OHR, and Oxford University Press, to go beyond simple text-to-the Web models and incorporate sound, video, image, and more into oral history scholarship, from supplementary materials to fully integrated multimedia articles. Oral historians are particularly well positioned to engage with new opportunities—to explore and create new publication models that more fully utilize all the fruits of their research. And, more importantly, she is here to invite, to challenge, those exploring oral history and digital technologies to help design and develop these new models for oral history scholarship using all the tools and technology at our disposal.

#### Melanie Morse, The Randforce Associates

Though dynamic websites hold great promise as the medium for publishing oral histories, publishing large collections on the web is no simple task. As an interim and/or alternative tool for publishing oral history in a hyper-textual format, we have been exploring the use of Adobe Acrobat to create robust multi-media PDF files. Interactive PDF’s are an effective way to make an audio or video oral history collections highly accessible, while allowing for a creative design process in a consumer-grade software application, and resulting in a digital product that is cross-platform and easily printable. Our work in indexing oral history collections emphasizes direct access to source passages within long oral history interview files through flexible interfaces and thematic cross-referencing. This discussion will consist of a tour of some interactive PDF’s, with carefully designed indexes, video screens, seek-to-time technology and more, boldly taking you where transcripts cannot.

#### Judith Weiland, University at Buffalo Technology Incubator

#### Show and Tell: Personal Stories in the Classroom

Starting our sixth year as partners with Buffalo City School District in two Teaching American History grants, elementary and high school teachers were offered unparalleled access to over 100 hours of indexed and cross-referenced oral history audio and video collections. Teachers were able to engage and interact with the material in a variety of ways: from searching and listening to oral

histories, to making and editing audio and video clips, to collecting their own oral histories in the classroom and beyond, to producing multi-media classroom presentations for their use and for teaching instructional kits intended as part of the grant. Uses include Moviemaker movies, PowerPoint slideshows, or simply audio CD's with track listings to instruct or supplement lesson plans, all facilitated in conjunction with Randforce. Teachers increased content knowledge and technical skills in the process and in this session I'll highlight some of the best examples. I began the work of using applied digital technologies for direct access to oral history in 1999 as a graduate student with Dr. Michael Frisch and ultimately into the focused work of the Randforce Associates, LLC. Randforce, located in the University at Buffalo Technology Incubator since 2002, is a consulting firm specializing in Oral History indexing, access, and digital multi-media production.

#### **Session 5.4      ROUNDTABLE: Campus Oral History Programs Roundtable: Changes And Transformations**

Troy Reeves

##### **Campus Oral History Programs Roundtable: Current Changes & Future Transformations**

In the beginning of the story of post-WWII oral history, there was a campus oral history program. What started at Columbia as an experiment has mushroomed over time to the point where almost every state has a campus with an oral history component. Building on this year's OHA Annual Meeting theme, five leaders of campus oral history programs—from colleges around the country, such as Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wisconsin—will come together in a roundtable session to talk about some current projects and future ideas or visions. On top of those items, the participants will furnish a brief overview of their program's history/evolution.

Since this is a roundtable session, the heads of the various collections will not offer formal papers on specific topics but they will touch on one of more of the aspects of a vital oral history program: Gathering, Preserving, and Providing Access to oral history, as well as Educating interested individuals on oral history's art and science and Collaborating with individuals and groups on oral history interviews and projects. With the hope of fostering discussion with the audience and each other, all presenters will speak for no more than

#### **Session 5.7      Multimedia Portals for Video Oral Histories: A Case Study from The HistoryMakers**

Mike Christel

##### **Facilitating Access to The HistoryMakers Video Oral Histories through Informedia Technologies and a Multimedia Web Portal**

The Informedia research group at Carnegie Mellon University advances digital library research and the state of the practice of digital libraries by deploying existing, workable technologies into fielded operational video collections, evaluating that deployment with a focus on the human users, and iterating and refining the technology delivery to better suit the needs of the library patrons. In 2007 the project collaborated with The HistoryMakers and used speech alignment, image processing, and language understanding technologies to promote multiple levels of access and fuel the viewing of the actual video recordings in a large oral history corpus. A workshop was held at SUNY Buffalo to gauge stakeholders' interests and needs, drawing participation from the New York Public Library, multiple universities, and a commercial indexing company. This workshop led to interface revisions for access into over 900 hours (over 18000 story segments) from The HistoryMakers archive. In addition, this corpus and interface was tested with hundreds of university beta testers in 2008 and 2009, resulting in a system deployment decision to create an Adobe Flash web portal into the corpus, rather than a stand-alone application. The design and development of the Flash application providing quick, easy access into The HistoryMakers digital archive will be discussed and demonstrated. Manually annotating vast video and oral history collections is expensive and impractical, with automated audiovisual processing making accessible the fuller knowledge and meaning inherent in these collections. Specifically, the Informedia digital video library research group ([www.idvl.org](http://www.idvl.org)) is testing and making available software processing tools (e.g., text and map search, speech alignment) and interfaces to allow full-content search and navigation down to the word level for vast oral history collections. The work is funded by the National Science Foundation, with the goal of tapping digital video more accurately and completely as a compelling, illustrative educational resource.

#### **Session 6.1      ROUNDTABLE: So, What Do You Do? (Part 2)**

Douglas Lambert, The Randforce Associates

This session is a dedicated time and space for dialogue, idea exchange, and building upon common interests following the highly condensed presentations in "So, What Do You Do? Part I" (Session 5.1, see individual abstracts there). This series of round table discussions will allow for panelists and audience members to interact and react to the presentations in Part I, providing ample time for questions, discussion, and especially, getting to know more about each other's work. By reshuffling presenters and themes in three or four discussion rounds, a great opportunity is created for follow up and to build new connections in oral history.

## **Session 6.2 BOOK SPOTLIGHT: Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II**

Rosemary F. Crockett

### **Book Spotlight: Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II**

### **The Tuskegee Airmen Wives Tell Their Stories: Living & Working in Tuskegee**

The World War II era Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American aviation units in the U.S. military. They trained and served during the years of segregation in the military and the United States in general. Right alongside the men were a group of talented and spirited young women, their wives. This presentation introduces the Tuskegee Institute community that the men and their wives encountered when Tuskegee Army Air Field was established nearby in Alabama in the early 1940s and provides a glimpse into the world that the women navigated as wives, mothers, and employees while the men were in training or working at the base. While some women chose not to work, others worked at various jobs, including as nurses, secretaries, clerks, and telephone operators. Some ladies eagerly joined the local Tuskegee social circles, while others felt excluded from them. For some Tuskegee was a hot, humid, God-forsaken place, while others found it a vast improvement over the places from whence they had come.

## **Session 6.3 Oral History and Latino/a Communities**

Myrna García

Ph.D. candidate in Ethnic Studies

University of California, San Diego

### **RUDY LOZANO, EL HIJO DEL PUEBLO [THE COMMUNITY'S SON]**

One morning in June 1983, someone fatally shot Rodolfo "Rudy" Lozano—a key activist in Chicago's Mexican community—in his home. Though the circumstances of Lozano's murder remain unresolved, evidence strongly suggests that it was an assassination, not a random crime. In 1982, Lozano called out the unjust work conditions at Del Rey tortilla factory. He also organized the factory workers, including the undocumented. The owners of Del Rey repeatedly tried to undermine and weaken his organizing. Despite the threats, Lozano filed a case against Del Rey with the National Labor Relations Board, a federal agency that governed union and employer relations in the private sector. Furthermore, Lozano's 1983 aldermanic campaign challenged the Chicago political machine, a system of tight political control in the city. Machine politicians preserved the power of former Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley. However, Lozano built a strong base of anti-machine supporters, including a key alliance with Harold Washington who became Chicago's first African American mayor. Though he was a merely a few votes away from securing office, many believe Lozano symbolically won the race

The news of Lozano's death shocked Chicago's ethnic Mexican community. The community has kept Lozano's legacy as a community hero alive. Lozano exemplified an unwavering commitment to immigrant rights, especially the undocumented. Lozano was the co-founder and leader of the Chicago chapter of El Centro de Acción Social Autónomo- Hermandad General de Trabajadores [the Center for Autonomous Social Action- General Brotherhood of Workers], a Marxist-Leninist immigrant rights organization (1974-1983). He believed in the importance of developing a collective sin fronteras [beyond borders] identity and political sensibility that included Mexicans and Mexican Americans alike. By understanding Lozano's activism for immigrant rights, we can see how his politics contested citizenship as the ultimate means for equal rights and for inclusion into the nation.

Peter J. Myers

### **"Ordinary People" do Extraordinary Things**

How have people struggled and survived in times of crisis? How do people create change and bear witness to it? How do they construct their stories of these moments?

I challenge my undergraduate students to consider such questions when they do their oral history projects. Most discover that their interviewees have lived through times of crisis and times of change, and have often been active in transforming theirs and others' lives. Students select an individual over the age of fifty and focus on a particular historical theme for their project. Popular themes include immigration, migratory labor, and the Vietnam War.

My presentation will deal with the lives of three extraordinary Mexican-American women, who made a difference by telling their stories to their loved ones.

Lydia Nevarez was interviewed by her daughter Melida Nevarez in the spring of 2003. Lydia showed her Melida a scrapbook compiled during her teen years. In that scrapbook were mimeographed sheets and newspaper articles about an event that transformed Lydia's life. In October of 1969, eighteen year old Lydia Nevarez helped organize the Crystal City High School Walkout. She and her fellow Chicano students had had enough of the discrimination that Mexican-Americans faced in the high school. Anglo students were favored in being cheerleaders and homecoming king and queen. (The school administration told students that the homecoming selection was made by Hollywood stars including Tab Hunter and Glen Campbell.) Melida captured her mother's story and recognized that change does not happen through passivity but through action.

Patricia Lopez wondered why her mother Margarita Garza's health has suffered over the years. In 1953, at the age of seven, Margarita immigrated to the United States with her family from Mexico. The following year Margarita was forced to drop out of

school, so she could help out her family financially doing migratory labor. Often on her hands and knees, Margarita worked the fields in Michigan and Ohio. While doing such back-breaking work, the fields would be sprayed with pesticides. Her family was assured that it would do them no harm. Although Margarita lived a tough life, she made sure her children's lives would be better. Patricia is now an honor student at Palo Alto College and makes her mother proud.

Connie Torres's story defines perseverance. Her granddaughter-in-law Elizabeth Vasquez learned about how one mother of a wounded Vietnam soldier was determined to see her injured son. After receiving a Western Union Telegram stating that her son Angel had been wounded in February of 1968, Connie Torres made contact with the Red Cross in order to see him. The only trouble was that her son was re-located to Japan for medical treatment, while Connie was in Dallas, Texas. As fast as she could expedite it, Connie got to Japan and saw her son Angel. Angel recovered and Connie was reassured. Connie's story shows the lengths an individual will go to get a "job" done.

My presentation will focus on these three human stories, and encourage participants (particularly teachers) in the audience that the best way for students to learn about the recent past is to record the stories of those who lived in it.

#### **Antonio Vásquez, M.A.**

#### **Oral History and Community Engagement: Lessons from the Mexican American Oral History Project in Travis County, Texas**

A division of the Austin Public Library, the Austin History Center recently launched the Mexican American Trailblazers Project as a means to help document for the first time the long-standing presence and diverse contributions made by Mexican/Mexican American communities of Travis County area, located in south central Texas. In August 2010, an opening reception commemorating this endeavor was held, where thirty-two Mexican Americans were honored across nine areas, with over three hundred persons in attendance. This essay seeks to accomplish two goals related to this project. Firstly, a few excerpts from oral history interviews will be shared as a means to highlight experiences that have shaped the collective memory and social history of Mexican Americans in Austin. Secondly, this essay offers a few insights in utilizing oral history projects like the Mexican American Trailblazers Project as a form of community engagement, where the importance is placed on nurturing long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between dominant societal institutions and the communities being served. Lessons learned as a volunteer throughout this experience will be shared, which are especially critical for academic researchers seeking to link their scholarship with community-based organizations and projects.

#### **Session 6.5      Mapping Identities: Three Oral History Projects on the Transformation of Communities**

Eirini Chryssocheri

#### **Out of Alexandria: Memories and narratives of displacement**

This paper based on an oral history project supported by the Library of Alexandria, explores the memories of the Greek Alexandrians who were compelled to abandon the city after the revolution of Egypt.

Towards the early 20th century, of all foreigners who lived in Alexandria, Greeks formed the largest and best organized community. But the "critical event" of 1952 and the nationalizations that followed caused radical political and social changes which lead most Europeans to depart.

Back "home" in Greece, the nostalgia of the exiles played an important role in keeping their memories vivid, across time and space, but also in reconstructing their own visions of the past. In their process of mythmaking the experience of loss and displacement shaped the notion that Alexandrians left behind a golden age and an unforgettable city.

Nostalgic Greeks, still visit their hometown several years after departure, attributing an existential value to this experience. But Alexandria of today is a different city than that remembered by the exiles. Urban modernization and population explosion have radically changed the image of the city and this transformation provided a new kind of crisis upon its former residents.

Focusing on the narrative repertoires used by the Greeks to express their attachment to and experience of Alexandria, this paper attempts to articulate the sense of loss that followed their exodus from the city and explore the spatial process of memory and nostalgia of those who left and never felt at home in Greece.

#### **Martina Gugglberger**

#### **"I always wanted to go to Africa": Mission and Identity Across Continents**

The paper deals with the life stories of Catholic mission nuns in South Africa. Born in Austria and Germany between 1912 and 1942 the interviewees entered the order of the Sisters of the Precious Blood after World War II. After their religious formation in Europe they were sent to South Africa where the order has maintained several mission stations since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Over the past 60 years several profound transformations have challenged not only the Catholic mission itself but also the identity of its members. First, the political changes in South Africa, with the end of the apartheid regime, changed the framework for Catholic congregations for religious, social and institutional activities. Second, within the Catholic Church itself, the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, changed the understanding of monastic life and mission work. Third, mission orders have suffered from a dramatic

decrease in members since the 1970s. Fourth, since the 1960s, indigenous women have been officially integrated in the congregation and, at present, the “young” generation of mission sisters is black and is taking over the leading positions.

The paper presents how these shifts of values and historical realities shape the self-presentations of the last generation of European mission sisters in South Africa.

#### Alexandra Wachter:

#### "The Last Heroes of Leningrad: Living with the Unforgettable in Modern St. Petersburg"

This paper is based on an oral history project on the memory of the siege of Leningrad (1941-44). As part of my Ph.D. project I spent a year living in modern St. Petersburg with the goal to seek out the traces of this historical event which left a large proportion of survivors with memories which can only be called bleak, or – as Western psychologists might suggest – traumatizing. A considerable amount of time was spent with individual survivors and survivors' organizations in order to explore how changing political, economic and social conditions shape the way the past is being remembered and narrated.

A state-created myth of mass heroism, which was promoted during and after the war and which included every citizen regardless of age and occupation, was the politically motivated prism through which the war and thus the siege were to be interpreted in the Soviet Union, and while other nuances were continually being added in the course of post-war and post-Soviet history, it remained the key tone. Later versions of the historical event distinguish themselves not by questioning or re-evaluating the original doctrine, but by adjusting it to new needs or realities. Thus the stress was either shifted from the importance of one detail to another, or by adding details which to conceal was no longer useful or possible. As a result, the original interpretation of the siege was expanded, but not challenged in the core of its meaning.

However, survivors today are confronted with changing values, a changing city, greater freedom, and with the fact that fewer and fewer of them are alive to pass on the "real" story. Strategies to secure that next generations will do the job the "right way" are being discussed within organizations, while some individuals react with a variety of emotions, ranging from a certain confusion, insecurity, to anger and bitterness or liberation.

### Session 6.7 Civil Rights, Cultural Conflict, and Social Space

Mary Sterner Lawson

#### "The Neutral Zone: A Lady of Spain's Encounter with 1960's Georgia"

The experience of coming in 1962 from the freedom of Madrid to Jim-Crow-dominated Georgia was a severe culture shock to a woman who had turned down a scholarship to La Scala to marry into a prominent African American family renowned for its civil rights activism. In a culture new to her, Amaya King retained an inborn sense of humor, a defense mechanism that helped her to endure public and private incidents to which she was subjected. Fueled as well by her father's powerful admonitions that she judge people individually, not as a group, she saw the utter ridiculousness of episodes like the one in which she was placed in a hospital hallway (*the neutral zone*, she called it) to avoid either integrating the black section or being visited by her husband and his family. Rich with supporting stories, this presentation focuses a unique light on culture and race in Albany, Georgia, as it was observed and interpreted by a perceptive, quiet, unique, bi-cultural witness.

Millie Coleman

#### Who was Frances Virginia: Oral History Transforms the View of Southern Hospitality

During the first half of the 20th century, “tea rooms” flourished across the USA. Atlanta was no exception with its Frances Virginia Tea Room. Contemporary women imagine a small space, serving insubstantial food. Feminist scholars dismiss it as frivolous, frequented by upper class women with time on their hands. Male historians ignore it, focusing on Atlanta’s *racial* segregation in restaurants. My oral history research has revealed a dynamically different story. Serving 2000 meals per day, as busy as a modern McDonald’s, ‘The Frances Virginia,’ as it was affectionately known, was a transformative, proto-feminist, yet gender inclusive, space. Frances Virginia owners, employees and diners were a dynamic force, opposing and resisting blatant sexist policies such as the “Men Only” sign at Rich’s Department Store’s Cockerel Grill and the more subtle, social prohibitions at The Varsity, which limited female public dining until the Viet Nam War era.

This presentation includes my accidental discovery of Frances Virginia’s story via conversations about Chicken Salad, propelling me, a cookbook author and Senior Citizen, into Women’s Studies, graduate school, and oral history methodology. Interviews with four generations of Frances Virginia diners, employees, owners and their descendants revealed the complex racial and gendered lives of entrepreneurial women, and loyal patrons (including men and children) who articulated celebrations and struggles to live in and improve the South during the crises of The Great Depression, World War II and Equal/Civil Rights eras.

Furthermore, these interviews led to discovery of cultural artifacts, public as well as private records of forgotten memories, photos, menus and business contracts. This triangulated research inarguably reveals and documents an unacknowledged history, which contrasts with romanticized images of Atlanta socialites and stay-at-home-mothers. In conclusion, this oral history project articulates and embodies a different story, the transformative intersections of Atlanta’s social geography, politics, race, gender and even culinary history.

Michelle A. Purdy

### Telling Anew: Stories of School Desegregation in “The City Too Busy to Hate”

Post-Brown scholars mostly account for the experiences of those involved in public school desegregation. Little attention is given to the desegregation of private schools and those who experienced such changes. As segregation academies proliferated throughout the South in the 1960s, some elite private schools desegregated. One such school is The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, Georgia (plural in name only).

Westminster’s story is an example that highlights the intersection of national, regional, and local positions, concerns, and efforts around the recruitment and retention of black students to southern independent schools. Additionally, private schools, like public schools, are contextualized by their physical locations. Therefore, the desegregation of Westminster, founded in 1951, is not completely understood without consideration of Atlanta’s public persona, “The City Too Busy to Hate.” Portraying Atlanta differently from other southern cities that were the epicenters of massive resistance, city leaders sought to retain Atlanta’s image as one that compromised on racial equality. Following the City’s example, Westminster desegregated in the fall of 1967; five years later the first black students graduated.

Part of the complexity of this research has been gaining access to Westminster alumni, both black and white, and others associated with the alumni and the school, and navigating various approaches to capture oral histories. Therefore, this presentation will highlight the ways in which the researcher has gained such access and the process of securing oral histories. Utilizing interview excerpts, the researcher will account for how these oral histories bolster the archival research included in the larger study concerning the desegregation of Westminster. Such a study provides a different perspective of school desegregation during a heightened era of political and social change.

### Session 6.8 Culture, Community and Memory

Fatme Myuhtar

#### **The Revival Process: A Pomak (Bulgarian-Muslim) Life of Dissent amidst Cultural Oppression in Communism Bulgaria**

*Revival process* was the euphemistic term for the comprehensive policy of the communist regime in Bulgaria (1944-1989) to involuntarily replace the Arab-Turkish names of the Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks) with appellations of Orthodox Christian significance during the 1960s and 1970s. This wholesale assimilation generated a profound disturbance in the Pomak community. Within two decades, a people with markedly Muslim identity were forced to rethink their way of life to comply with the regime’s demands for a culturally uniform nation. The underlying assimilation rationale was that as descendants of Christian Bulgarians, the Pomaks could not profess Islam and still be true Bulgarians. The regime imposed a radical transformation of Pomak identity which, in turn, provoked equally intense opposition. People struggled to come to terms with the new communist reality by either adjusting to it or by suffering the consequences of dissent via mistreatment, imprisonment, and often death. The *revival process* is a defining moment in Pomak history that calls for scholarly attention and remembering. This paper builds an abstract portrait of the Pomak multitude that suffered the turmoil, survived it and made their choice of identity based on that experience. Ramadan Runtov’s story, acquired through interviews, is the focal point of the analysis because his life of a dissenter, political prisoner and forced émigré constitutes the ultimate expression of personal dissent and the collective Pomak struggle for self-preservation. The overlapping accounts of other interviewees, obtained independently, and relevant archival documentation, lend indispensable support to the storyline.

#### **Raffaele Florio, Ph.D.**

#### **The Fishermen’s Rebellion: Memory and the Reassertion of Power**

This paper discusses an ongoing memory study in a maritime community on the Cilento Coast of Southwest Italy. Using the methods of anthropology, history, and archaeology, it weaves artifacts of three diverse forms – written history, material culture, and cultural memory – into a single narrative. The study allows the collective memory – in the form of oral history and folklore – of native villagers to interpret the past on its own terms. Local legend, poetry, and ritual is evaluated in the context of the sea – in its paradoxical beauty and danger. Additionally, it traces the village’s ability to reclaim its identity through various episodes of perceived change.

The paper outlines the feast of St. Mary of the Sea, a patroness which arguably can be traced to pre-Christian cults of a obscure Greek goddess whose memory has been retained though the collective memory of the villagers. Her presence ebbs and flows, and reasserts itself through countless generations in the face of monumental change – examples to be noted are: Romanization of the Greek city-state, Christianization of the ancient ritual, Byzantine domination, Saracen attacks, European colonization, and most recently the threat of modernity. In each, the collective memory has provided a source for unification, identity, and power; in most cases it resulted in peaceful displays designed to remind the population of their core values.

The sacred – in this case, the church sanctuary – does not claim jurisdiction over St. Mary of the Sea. She lies in the domain of the profane – in this case, the landscape, the beach, the fleet, and the people themselves. This display – i.e. the fishermen’s rebellion –

answers an essential question for research in cultural memory. The monsignor, in fact the Church itself, is seen, in the collective identity of the village, as an outsider. In this sense, the village retains the power to reassert itself at will when its core values are violated.

The presentation will include a reading of poignant excerpts from the “village poet,” a woman who insists on writing her poetry in the “lingua antica,” the old language, as an attempt to preserve the identity of the culture which in her eyes is currently being challenged.

Marie Pelletier

### **Understanding the World through Religion?**

#### **Stories of Karma, Miracles and Premonition in Life Narratives of Cambodian Refugees**

In recent literature on Cambodian refugees, many researchers have found that survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime saw religion as a way of preserving culture, a source of therapy or a framework for trying to understand the events of their lives, successfully or unsuccessfully. Through deep analysis of oral history interviews with Cambodian refugees living in Montreal, I aim to look at questions of religion and genocide from a deeply subjective point of view by exploring the personal stories Cambodian refugees tell about religion.

I argue that religious narratives of genocide survivors are especially useful in exploring the process of storytelling: by presenting an explanation for life, religion provides an overall framework through which an individual can shape his or her life story. Furthermore, the context of the genocide often forces individuals to question the very framework through which they make sense of their lives to themselves and to others.

I found that drawing from traditional Cambodian religion, Christian influence and new understandings of Buddhist concepts and Khmer rituals, Cambodian survivors of genocide tell stories that talk of tragedy, survival, agency, victimhood and mystery and attempt to answer the often unanswerable question “Why?” The stories of religion at times assigned meaning to events and created a coherent life story and identity, and at other times put in sharper relief the perceived lack of coherence in one’s life. By looking at those stories, I believe that we can also better understand the ways in which subjective experiences and life stories can be used by academics to, as Alessandro Portelli said it best “tell us less about *events* than about their *meaning*.”

### **Session 6.9 PRESIDENTIAL PANEL: SNCC and the African-American Freedom Struggle: Using Oral History to Reshape the Narrative of the Freedom Movement**

Emilye Crosby and Hasan K. Jeffries

This panel proposal grows out of a larger interest in using oral history to explore the origin and evolution of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), as well as the impact that the organization had on the African American freedom struggle and American politics. One goal of the project is to work collaboratively with movement activists to create a book of edited interviews that tells the history of SNCC in the collective voice of former SNCC activists.

SNCC was the driving force behind the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Its young organizers pioneered new tactics and developed projects in places that others deemed too dangerous for black protest. In addition, their organizing practices enabled people who had been immobilized by fear to act. SNCC members also continued organizing long after the movement’s heyday, carrying the fight for civil and human rights forward into the Black Power era and beyond.

Our panel will incorporate a discussion of methodology with several topical examples to address the challenges and possibilities of using oral history and collaboration to engage a popular audience with a history reflective of the best scholarship. In particular, we will focus on Black Power, gender/ women, SNCC’s legacies (in terms of ongoing activism and the organization’s impact on contemporary politics), and the key ways the SNCC experience is at odds with the popular understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. Through these topics, we will address some of the challenges related to the persistent scholarly skepticism around emphasizing or highlighting oral history; failing or distorted memories; and the distrust of SNCC activists for historians/ scholars. We will also explore the possibilities for activist/ scholarly collaboration and highlight the potential for using vivid, first-person storytelling to convey a complex, nuanced, and accurate history.

### **Session 8.1 ROUNDTABLE: Using Oral History to Change and Transform Interpretation in National Parks**

#### **ROUNDTABLE: Using Oral History to Change and Transform Interpretation in National Parks**

This roundtable brings together historians and archivists from five units of the National Park Service that reflect the varied ways oral history is being used to document and interpret the stories parks tell, the resources they protect, and the complex history of the NPS itself.

Jo Urion will explore the history and memory of a bitter labor strike that gripped the copper range in Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula in 1913. A tragedy that marked the strike occurred on Christmas Eve when many of the striking miners’ families gathered for a party at the Italian Hall in Calumet. A false cry of “fire” caused a panicked rush to the door; the result was the death of 74 people, most of them children. Some eyewitnesses claimed that a strike opponent gave the false alarm. Others suggested that deputies intentionally held the doors shut against the pushing crowd. Divisions hardened even more after the event, when management’s charity offering to the bereaved was spurned by labor leaders. The Italian Hall fire remains an unresolved moment in local history and a loaded topic for

historians. Urion will examine different memories of what happened and the challenges of interpreting this highly contested history in a national park.

Alan Marsh will discuss how Andersonville National Historic Site uses oral histories with prisoners of war to convey the POW story to public audiences. In museum exhibits, films, and community theater, site visitors have been able to hear POWs from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War describe the experience of capture, the journey to prison, living conditions in captivity, torture, death of comrades, survival strategies, and liberation. Marsh will explore how Andersonville has transformed interviews into interpretive and educational programs and media.

Kate Funk and Steve Theus will discuss how oral history interviews conducted with President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter, Carter family members, and townspeople of Plains, GA, inform the interpretation at the presidential historic site. Interviews illustrate the deep connection between people and place and how the rural southern culture that revolved around farming, faith, education, and issues of race molded the character and shaped the policies of President Carter. As a way to enhance the visitor experience and to demonstrate the interrelationships of the people of Plains and the Carters, the site has used interview recordings in exhibits, audio tours and podcasts.

Yosemite National Park archivists are using oral history to build its collections, to enhance interpretation of existing archival holdings, and to share the park's history with the public. Brenna Lissoway will discuss how park staff planned for and are managing an ambitious oral history project for which the list of potential interviewees swelled into the hundreds. Some sixty former park employees and park residents have shared their memories of working and growing up in Yosemite.

## Session 8.2 Crisis and Response in the LGBT Community

Jodie Talley Knapton

### Atlanta, Georgia—The World’s Religious Crucible for the Time’s Religious Crisis: The South as the Origin of Gay-Affirming Religion

Little has caused more social crisis in America during past several decades than LGBT civil rights activism and its clash with religious fundamentalism. The southeast U.S. might seem at first consideration the most unlikely of places to have generated nearly *every* breakthrough and “first” in gay religious history. Specifically, Atlanta and Georgia are credited with all of the following: the *first* gay-affirming church in America (circa 1946), the first gay American saint and martyr, the first gay denomination (MCC, founded by Georgia native, Troy Perry), the largest gay church in the world (founded in Texas by a native Atlantan), the first gay Muslim group in the world (Al-Fatiha), the first confirmation of gay marriage by a mainstream Protestant denomination (2005 UCC synod *in Atlanta*), the establishment of the first gay Episcopal organization (Integrity), the first president to address LGBT rights (President Carter), etc.

Re-stated, since WWII the United States has witnessed the establishment of predominantly gay congregations as well as “welcoming” and “affirming” mainstream congregations and religious organizations in the face of oppositional culture war. My study investigates the origins and evolving history of gay and gay-affirming religious traditions in America with a requisite emphasis on Atlanta and Georgia. Primarily an oral history, this project draws from over 100 interviews in addition to primary and secondary documents, and several conclusions unfold: 1) Southern culture has been more accommodating of gays and lesbians than heretofore appreciated *and* in its own particular way; 2) citizens of Atlanta and Georgia have been *the primary historical producers* of gay and gay-affirming religious culture and institutions in America; 3) gay religious history pre-dates the Stonewall Rebellion, thus troubling and adding nuance to the traditional metanarrative of LGBTQ history; and 4) the paths of and to gay-affirming religious activism and institution building follows several distinct patterns.

Kurt Gohde

Kremena Todorova

### Passing: Drag and Transitioning Through Crisis

This presentation will highlight the creative use of oral history narratives reconstructed as dramatic monologues to be performed by actors on stage. Along with the interviews that informed them, photographs of the drag queens and kings featured in them, and writing inspired by the performers, these monologues comprise *Passing*: an ongoing artwork now in its third year. By fashioning the stories of individual drag queens and kings into a public performance, *Passing* facilitates both a new awareness of lives that are too readily forgotten and a more nuanced understanding of the social history of Lexington, Kentucky. Our presentation will include projected photographs, recorded dramatic monologues, and audience participation. We will ask volunteers to read selections of monologues so that they can more fully experience the stories that are part of *Passing*.

Like the stories that inform them, the monologues speak of resilience during times of change. Immigrating to the United States from Venezuela at the age of fourteen, Hernando was expected to become the man of the house. Instead, he told his mother that he is gay, then faced her anger when she discovered that he is also a drag queen named Adriana Fuentes. Ten years after moving to a town where gay men, drag queens, and Latino immigrants alike are outsiders, Adriana was crowned Miss Gay United States.

Raised on the narratives of Lee Angelique and Sweet Evening Breeze—two Lexington drag queens who in 1969 overturned the Kentucky blue laws, which had requiring at least three articles of gender-appropriate clothing to be worn at all times—Jeanytte Wylde

built Lexington's most popular drag stage. Now retired from drag and known primarily as Juice, Jeanytte teaches new queens to sew, paint their faces, and move like women.

Svetlana Kitto

### **Intergenerational Reflection on the AIDS Crisis in the Queer Community**

The AIDS epidemic not only robbed contemporaneous generations of queer people of a legacy of extraordinary artistic, political and cultural activity, but also created an experience of community that did not exist before or after. Places became sites of loss or were claimed as loci of activism and outreach, forming a distinct and intimate landscape in response to crisis. For the first time, lesbians and gay men worked together—with the common goal of saving lives—and gave voice to the living, the dying and the dead through their actions and artwork.

The additional losses felt by later generations of gay people who remain severed from the unique vitality of earlier generations' political and artistic creativity is yet unexplored. This paper analyzes oral history interviews with writers and activists who were inspired to act during the early years of the AIDS crisis in New York City, and reflect on the complexity of a crisis that—both literally and figuratively—created and killed a community. These interviews serve as sites of intergenerational exchange and explore the ability of stories to restore the distinct vitality of an era of crisis often overshadowed by death.

Mims, Dennis Michael

### **Becoming the Cathedral of Hope (CoH)**

The CoH is currently the largest church in the world with a predominantly gay and lesbian congregation. This work tells the history of the church which is located in Dallas, Texas. This paper employs over 48 sources to help tell the church's rich history which includes a progressive Christian philosophy, an important contribution to the fight for gay civil rights, and fine examples of courage through social activism. This work enhances gay history as well as civil rights history. It also adds to the cultural and social history which concentrates on the South and Southwestern regions of the United States.

Becoming the Cathedral of Hope also contributes to the discipline of oral history. This paper utilizes 5 oral histories while discussing one of the most crucial parts in the history of the Cathedral of Hope (CoH). The oral histories used in this work illustrate a wide variety of individuals and views. They render the voices of the clergy and non-clergy. The oral histories tell the stories of the activists and non-activist. They offer both male and female perspectives. The oral histories also represent both homosexual and heterosexual perspectives. The various voices and views provided by the oral histories used in this work make the history of the CoH more complete and truthful. Oral histories are important to this paper because of the limited amount of organized primary source materials on the Cathedral of Hope. Though there are a number of letters, notebooks, meeting minutes, and church bulletins that provide information about the history of the CoH, the oral histories give details that the above sources do not.

## **Session 8.3      Ireland in Crisis, Then and Now: A Documentation Strategy**

Marion R. Casey

### ***Close Encounters of the Irish Kind***

Historically, Irish immigrants to the United States have had a low rate of return migration and, as a result, Irish Americans evolved a particularly unique relationship with Ireland. Their understanding of the homeland was a tapestry woven of facts, memories, and popular culture. Technological advances in the twentieth century telescoped the Atlantic divide, with an exponential impact on the Irish immigrant's ability to experience events at home. This has included the ability to travel to Ireland, by ship or air, often with children or teenagers in tow. As the historian Dennis Clark observed, "returning to Ireland is a rite of re-passage, a reversal of time and of lifetimes, and the tales it evokes are psychologically penetrating." Through oral history, we are able to recreate the moment of those encounters. For second generation Irish Americans raised on family stories about farm and village, parents and siblings, politics and poverty, the reality of contemporary Ireland was often an unsettling experience. This paper will explore how first encounters with Ireland have changed or remained the same over the course of the twentieth century, and reflect on how an emotional history that can only be captured aurally requires a mental readjustment about Irish America too. The "Returned Yank" in Irish literature and film has been constructed in a manner that often obscures the motivations and perspectives of non-tourist Irish American visitors, helping to create stereotypes and skewed perspectives that oral history can go far to correct.

Linda Dowling Almeida

### **What's New Is Old Again: Revisiting the New Irish in America**

The 1980s posed a particular challenge for Ireland and its very youthful population. It faced the familiar phenomenon of massive migration but its scale and necessity took the country and the immigrants themselves by surprise. Raised to be the first generation that did not have to emigrate, the New Irish as they called themselves were restless, angry and mobile. The 50,000 or so that made their way across the Atlantic faced many challenges primarily caused by their unstable documentation status and their fragile relationship with the existing Irish immigrant and ethnic communities that preceded them. Twenty years later we at Glucksman Ireland House engaged some of the more active members of the community to recall the period, the crises, the conflicts and the resolutions. Our collection of interviews is strong because the voices represent the diversity of opinions that existed within the community at the time politically, generationally, socially and religiously. To listen to the passion and commitment of those involved and why they engaged with the issues of the time provides a nuance and humanity that is not possible on paper. As a result of our work with this generation

of immigrants and their understanding of the historical significance of their interviews, the Irish Immigration Reform Movement donated their papers to our Archives of Irish America. The marriage of a document trail and oral record makes for a truly dynamic and fertile resource. As Ireland moves forward into the 21st century it faces new challenges, both social and economic, that mirror in some ways the crisis of the 1980s. Immigration on a mass scale seems, again, to be in the future of young Irish workers. The experience of an earlier generation provides a perspective that should prove invaluable to observers seeking to understand the upheaval in Ireland today.

#### **Session 8.4      Soldiers' Tales Un/Told: Oral History of, by, and for Combat Veterans**

Karol Bartlett

##### **The Natick Veterans Oral History Project at the Morse Institute Library in Natick, Massachusetts**

The Natick Veterans Oral History Project (NVOHP) has been in existence at the Morse Institute Library since 1998. The Project includes interviews with veterans who have served their country in the armed forces past or present. The Project also includes interviews with civilians who have helped on the Home Front, past or present. Karol will talk about the growth of the project, its website, the importance of cooperative funding, partnerships, and the constant need to keep interview questions relevant and respectful of Veteran's experiences.

Karol will also speak briefly about the Library's related photography exhibit "Legacy of Service: Our Community in Uniform." This exhibit started in May 2009 with just under 200 photographs that were brought to Library staff by family members and/or veterans from the community. Library staff also documented a brief service record of each veteran to accompany their photograph in the exhibit. The exhibit now has over 450 photographs and will run through December 2010. Each day we find groups of Veterans talking with each other in or near the exhibit area. Many of these veterans coming looking for photographs of "buddies" and leave finding new ones.

#### **Session 8.6      Forging Outlets, Links, and Allies for LGBT Oral Histories**

Dave Hayward

Chronicling lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities presents daunting challenges to oral historians. Nevertheless, lgbt connections to the civil rights movement and other movements for social change are intrinsic, integral, and immediate. These connections will be explored in this presentation, and pioneers of the lgbt movement will be present to share their stories.

As with many other minority communities, lgbt history has been the proverbial "red-headed stepchild" in status until very recently. In addition to neglect and discrimination, lgbt study also suffers from losing many pioneer members of the community to AIDS. Thus the best that can be done is to call upon and mobilize those primary sources that remain, and to document and archive their stories and the stories of their fallen comrades.

Meanwhile the direct links of the lgbt civil rights movement to other movements for social change must be definitively recognized. Over the past 40 years the lgbt civil rights movement represents an astonishing transformation from being social lepers, to being one of the most successful civil and human rights movement of modern times. Certainly it is one of the most heavily covered in the media.

A brief summary will be presented of initiatives taken to found and to develop lgbt history initiatives, including an overview of Georgia's Touching Up Our Roots project. Also sharing their stories of strength, hope and experience will be Doctor Jesse Peel, Winston Johnson of the Human Rights Campaign, and Lorraine Fontana of Lambda Legal.

#### **Session 8.7      "Where we come from": Contested and Constructed Histories of Small Town Texas**

Meredith Akins

##### **Negotiating Narrators: Stories of Revival and Retreat in Small-town Texas**

During the Fall 2009 semester, the members of our Oral History Graduate Seminar at Baylor University chose to do an oral history project about the community of Marlin, Texas. A member of our class had experience working at a church in Marlin, and she recommended Marlin as a prime location to study a small town in Texas that had experienced great changes over the course of its existence. At one time a prosperous and thriving town, Marlin is often looked at by those in surrounding areas as a "dying" town. After researching the town's history, our group made the decision to try to identify what had caused the changes in the town of Marlin. We chose to interview narrators of all different ages, ethnicities and backgrounds. We asked narrators about themselves, their experiences within the community, and what they believed were the reasons for the change in the town.

During this project, as we were seeking to find people's opinions on why Marlin was "dying," many narrators discussed the positive changes that they felt were happening in the Marlin community. Although most acknowledged that the community did have challenges to overcome, many expressed optimism that these obstacles were being addressed through the work of different individuals

and programs. Many narrators expressed a sense of pride in Marlin and were eager to communicate the changes they believed were happening through involvement in long-running community organizations, community government, or through the creation of new programs within the town. Many members of our project expressed both optimism and hope that their community was changing for the better. This portion of the panel will discuss the specific changes that are happening in the Marlin community presently and the perception by the narrators of how this change is affecting their town.

Alisha Hash

#### **“Accentuate the Positive”: The Interviewee as Advocate of a Sanguine Past**

Oral historians have long been drawn to studies of local communities facing particular obstacles or transitions. Recently, several classmates and I participated in an oral history project centered on Marlin, TX. Through our project we were able to explore the dynamic of change taking place in the city. Although once a booming hub of industry, technology and entertainment, Marlin has slowly been facing increasingly difficult problems such as racial and generational divides, a lagging economy, poor town leadership and an impoverished infrastructure. Our group set out to find out why this decline was happening and what actions were being taken to rectify the situation. We interviewed a variety of people from local businessmen and politicians to high school students and were rewarded with a wide range of responses and reactions to our inquiries. One of the most interesting results was insider versus outsider dichotomy that several interviewers encountered.

Although some group members were able to delve deeper into the problems facing Marlin, my particular set of interviews seemed to bring out the positive aspects of Marlin’s history. My interviewees were eager to emphasize what was good about Marlin rather than explore what had gone wrong and why the city is faltering. My paper will focus on why my interviewees felt the need to present their town in such an optimistic light. I would like to discuss the possibility that my narrators were uncomfortable discussing negatives because I was an outsider. Other group members had the advantage of being an insider to one degree or another but I was an outsider in every way. This presentation will analyze the situation of an oral historian as either an outside or insider, identifying the advantages and liabilities of both positions.

Paula Gerstenblatt

#### **(Re)Building Memory: The Mart Community Project**

(Re)Building Memory: The Mart Community Project, (MCP) is a cross disciplinary, collaborative project involving Mart residents, academics, and other local stakeholders to rebuild, renew and revitalize Mart. The community building effort began with (Re)Building Memory: The Mart Black History Project, an oral history project funded by Humanities Texas (HT) to rectify the omission of black residents and their contributions to Mart. The project culminated with the historical unveiling of a permanent collection of Mart’s Black history on June 20, 2009 at the Nancy Nail Library in Mart with over 80 people in attendance, including representatives of city government, the school district, churches, library board, Baylor University, and a diverse group of local residents. Humanities Texas funded a subsequent grant for Baylor University Oral History Institute to train Mart ISD teachers in oral history technique which is in the process of implementation, and the Dulaney Foundation has funded the MCP with Baylor University Oral History Institute as the administrative agency to develop:

- Community arts initiative to beautify public spaces and teach residents new skills
- Exploration of Mart history through the collection of oral histories
- Establish a community vegetable/flower and sculpture garden
- Digital literacy project to teach Mart residents and Mart ISD staff of all ages how to use equipment and learn skills to create innovative, web-based writing and video content.
- Integrate with HT funded oral history projects and University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work course designating Mart as the site for service learning projects.

This presentation will describe the evolution of (Re)Building Memory, the community – university partnerships, and the contribution oral history projects can make on community engagement and addressing the past in a way that leads to reconciliation and the “(re)building” of memory.

#### **Session 8.8 100 Years and Counting: Generational Farms and Farm Families**

Tanya Finchum

#### **Yesteryear, Today, and Tomorrow: The Faithful Farm Family**

Economics of the recent past and of the present are reshaping our world and the world of the family farm owner. Life on the family farm today bears little resemblance to farm life 30, 50, or more years ago. If memories are windows to human struggles, then oral histories with owners of family farms can provide an inside look at ‘reckoning with the past and reconsidering the future.’

To be designated as a Centennial Farm in Oklahoma, the farm has to have been owned by the same family for 100 or more years and be producing a certain amount of income.

The present day generation of farm families is not only concerned with the current economics of farming as a way of life but also with an uncertain future for the land they and those before them have clung to. Oral histories of the farms encompass vintage family

scrapbooks, visits to cemeteries, and discussion regarding the next 100 years. Some farms are going strong, some have been divided, some have been sold with the proceeds being divided among siblings, and others are waiting in, what seems to be, limbo. Attendees will peek through 'windows opened by shared memories,' and learn about present day generational farmers, their methods of preserving the past, their expectations for the future, and some of the challenges for the oral historians.

Juliana Nykolaiszyn

### **So was that a Guinea or a Chicken? : Farm Imagery and the Oral History Interview**

As family farms continue to disappear across America, Oklahoma has taken the opportunity to recognize farm families who have chosen to "have and to hold" the land for at least 100 years. In 1989, the Oklahoma Historical Society began the Centennial Farm and Ranch Program as one way to document the agricultural history of the state. In 2008, the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program at the OSU Library developed the Centennial Farm Families Oral History Project as a way to document life on the farm past, present and future.

As part of the interview process, we try to tour the family farm whenever possible. Listening to the caretakers of the land talk about the ponds their grandfather or father had built or about the birth of a new calf adds so much texture to the story. Standing in a hundred year old barn built with hand hewed timbers imagining what it might have been like for those early pioneers who, by necessity, had to be as self sufficient as possible one becomes even more aware of the silences. One also begins to hear the cadence of the farm, the sound of hooves, the rhythm of the water pump, and the panting of the familiar farm dog.

A tour of the farm exposes the 'not so pretty' side as well such as remains of vintage farm machinery tucked away in ravines or decaying structures. Yet, these snapshots tell a tale all their own. Attendees will peek through 'windows opened by shared memories,' and learn about present day generational farmers, their methods of preserving the past, and their expectations for the future.

### **Session 9.2 War, Resistance, and Displacement**

Dian Baker

#### **Oral History of Hmong Nurses Educated and Practicing in Southeast Asia between 1950 and 2000**

From 1950 to 2000 the country of Laos endured persistent political upheaval. In 1960-70's during the American-Vietnam War, the U.S. engaged in a secret war staged from the highland plains in Laos. The U.S. built clandestine airfields in Laos with assistance from the Hmong, an ethnic minority, agrarian group, who practiced animist beliefs and primarily used shaman and herbalist as providers of healthcare. After the American withdrawal in 1975, Southeast Asia was in chaos and many of the Hmong were forced to relocate to refugee camps. Malaria and causalities from war endangered life on a daily basis. During this period of upheaval little is known about how healthcare was provided for the victims of war. Oral histories from the first cohort of Hmong nurses educated in Laos uncovered why and how a healthcare system emerged under conditions of significant societal stress and war.

Laura Lee P. Huttenbach

#### **In the Shadow of Mt. Kenya: Conversations with a Mau Mau**

In October 1953, Mr. Japhlet Thambu took his machete and led a group of 58 men into the forest east of Mt. Kenya to fight in a movement known as the Mau Mau Rebellion. He stayed there until 1955, trapping buffalo and ransacking farms for food. The only literate man in his regiment, he became Secretary of the movement, taking notes during executive meetings, and was promoted to Major General in early 1955. On September 17, 1955, he surrendered to British colonial forces on their promise that he would not be punished if he helped to peacefully end the State of Emergency. Later that year, he was taken to Manyani Detention Camp. He would spend the next three years in "Rehabilitation" for his involvement in Mau Mau.

In spring 2009, I lived with "The General" and his family for nine weeks on their coffee and tea farm near the village of Igoji, in Kenya's Eastern Province. I conducted a series of broad-ranging interviews with Mr. Thambu and returned with one hundred hours of audiotapes and fifty hours of video. The General fondly recalled his childhood as a herdboy and time spent sitting at the feet of Meru tribal elders learning his people's history. But missionaries told them that education took place in the classroom and tribal customs were evil, effectively suppressing the tradition of oral history. The General wanted to record his stories before they also were "lost."

At 88, The General remains Chairman of the farmers' cooperative which he founded and Chairman of *Njuri Ncheke*, the Indigenous Governing Counsel of Elders. He is a model farmer, and his family eats what they grow. Through our collaboration the General's life will be accessible not only to his family and community but to students of African history around the world.

Kelly E. Crager

#### **"The Goal was to Leave": An Examination of the Individual Soldier's Experience in the Vietnam War**

American military veterans of the Vietnam War have often struggled to adjust to life in the United States in the years following their service in Southeast Asia. Many have expressed bitterness and disillusionment regarding the war, focusing on faulty American military strategy, undue political interference in military matters, and society's treatment of veterans returning from the conflict. A sense of societal isolation developed among many Vietnam veterans, and they looked to protect themselves from what they believed to

be a society that did not try to understand them, and that would not understand them even if it tried. For years, these veterans chose to deal with the legacy of the war in their individually specific ways, shutting out others and not speaking about their wartime experiences. As more veterans have begun to speak about their experiences over the past several years, however, it is becoming apparent that the relationship of the individual to the larger group—in this case, the soldier to his squad, platoon, or company—had a vitally important impact upon the individual's wartime experiences. In this study, I will examine the experiences of American service personnel regarding their time in Southeast Asia during the war. Through the use of in-depth oral history interviews, one finds the inescapable theme of individuals searching for the camaraderie and understanding of a larger group in an effort to come to grips with their wartime experiences, and how for years during and following the war, they could not find this security.

### **Session 9.3      Oral History and Documenting Women's Professional Lives**

Jeannette Brown

#### **Stories and Struggles of Pioneer African American Women Chemists**

African American women in science have always labored under the "double bind" of being a woman and a minority in science. In the U. S., the first African American woman earned a PhD degree in chemistry in 1948, while the first white woman received this degree in the late 19th century.

We will discuss the accomplishments of Dr. Marie Daly the first known African American woman to receive a PhD in chemistry using a video oral history. We will also insert some excerpts of contemporary women chemists who can still be considered pioneers in the field of chemistry. Many of these women made some remarkable discoveries in science that are unknown to the general public. They also had to go through struggles in order to get the education to become a chemist in a time when they had no other role models and some of their male colleagues were unable to enter the field.

Kathleen Davison Lebeck, University of N.M. School of Law

Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, University of N.M. School of Law

Ana Martinez, University of N.M. School of Law

#### **Oral History and Women's Professional Lives**

##### **Women and the Law: Transformations while Living on the Arc of History**

Like most bar associations around the country, the New Mexico legal profession consisted primarily of white males with an occasional woman or Hispanic lawyer joining the profession until the late 60's and early 70's when significant numbers of women went to law school and became lawyers. The authors are designing and initiating an oral history project that will explore the transformations that occurred with the integration of women into legal education and into the legal profession.

Our aim is to use oral history interviews, and data gathered from a questionnaire, to gather the stories of the women and men who experienced and observed the great changes that took place with the integration of women into the legal profession.

The period we intend of analyze is approximately 1969-1985. This was the time when admissions of women at UNMSOL left the 'one or none' (women in each law school class) era and soared to 50+% of each graduating class where it has remained for over a decade.

We are asking our subjects how integration of women affected them personally, how, in their opinions, it impacted the profession, and how the presence of women might have resulted in changes to the law.. We are asking them for the factual underpinnings of their opinions concerning these transformations.

We have had nineteen students who participate in a Women and the Law seminar at UNMSOL interview some of the subjects for our project and are using these interviews to help us gather stories from faculty members and other lawyers. We will use the questionnaire to collect and analyze data and to select additional subjects for our oral interviews.

We expect to gather stories about this period of dramatic change in legal education and in the legal profession, exploring the effect of each individual's background, her/his motivating forces, obstacles and barriers, the surmounting of those challenges and other achievements as well as the disappointments incurred on the journey. We will compare and contrast the perceptions of men and women during the relevant period.

We will also chronicle and analyze the impact of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, LGBT status, language, age, and class on the process of integration and transformation of legal education and professional life.

Our project is in its design and early implementation phase and we will appreciate feedback from participants.

### **Session 9.5      Recollections of War**

Natasha Samreny

#### **Considering A Rewriting Of Lebanon's Past Through Oral Storytelling**

This paper explores interactions between Lebanon's historical narratives and the development of national identity among Lebanon's peoples. It considers the roles that such narratives play in Lebanese students' history educations, especially what is taught in schools

about the country's civil war of 1975 to 1989. It has been argued that Lebanon's students often finish school having learned more about the histories of other countries and ancient civilizations than about their own nation's modern histories. However, it is also argued that a leading alternative includes schools offering more regionally-based narratives of history often significantly guided by ideals and movements of major religious or political ideologies held by such schools' supporting communities. These considerations are important to Lebanon now because they strongly affect the formation of its youths' identities. Twenty years later and Lebanese leaders still do not agree on what to write into their schools' history textbooks, so students continue to learn from texts that blatantly skip over decades and discussions of modern events. Youth miss out on opportunities to learn and discuss fuller versions of their own country's history in a safe environment and in context; while adult leaders miss out on opportunities to improve trust and working relationships between current political communities by encouraging more open dialogue about shared controversial pasts.

Finally, this paper suggests alternative approaches to history education both in and outside of the classroom, especially through teaching students how to collect, analyze and discuss their personal historical narratives. Oral storytelling and family history already claim strong roles in Lebanese tradition. By putting microphones into the hands of eager, well-prepared youth, and working within a culture's established social framework, the potential arises to widely document different voices of history and teach students significantly useful research methodologies that they will continue to use in their respective paths through life.

M. Gail Hickey

#### **'I throw the gun away': Gender in Burmese refugee narratives**

Nearly 20,000 ethnic Burmese have come to the United States since 1990, seeking asylum from war-torn Myanmar (World Refugee Survey, 2009). Burmese refugees arrive in the U.S. with very different socio-historical experiences than do other Asian subgroups. This oral history study is designed to advance understanding about the gendered pre-migration experiences of ethnic Burmese living in the former Burma around the time of the 1988 political uprisings.

The researcher supports a commitment to accurate reflection of the views and perspectives of interviewees involved through inclusion of their actual words to produce "a theoretically informed interpretation of the culture" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 8). Inclusion of both male and female interviewees resulted in differing perspectives of the same event. For example:

There was an uprising in 1988. [My husband] participated in that, and he [escaped] to the border. After that, the military intelligence and the police came to the house and asked me questions several times. (female)

I found nine dead body of the soldier. One soldier, I found out something from his pocket. Is a little diary, yes. And one letter in Burmese, and the picture of the beautiful woman in it. I see writing [on] backside, "For my future husband" ... and the letter [says], this woman ... is pregnant already, pregnant, maybe three or four month [by the time she had] written this letter. When he came back from this front line, he going to get married to her. They have [celebration] ... they have [children in their future]. I feel like a shit, you know? I throw the gun away.... (female)

Back to the 1988 uprising.... Hundreds of people [in Sitgaing] were gunned down by the police force. They threw all the dead bodies into the Irrawaddy River. My friends and I went to the river and [waited]. We tried to identify the dead bodies [and take] pictures. We put those pictures on the wall and let all the people see the government forces had gunned down [innocent citizens] ... because Government Radio said, "There was a riot and only one or two people were killed by the police." So we have to show the public that the government killed a lot of people. And about a thousand students were killed during the demonstration. (male)

Jane Vieth

#### **Mother Courage's Children**

In the riveting anti-war play, Mother Courage and Her Children, Bertolt Brecht, the 20th century Marxist German playwright and poet, gives us an indomitable character, Mother Courage. She has the capacity to survive against all the odds regardless of their tremendous personal cost and despite the fact that she loses everything she has including all her children. Yet she endures, a tribute to the human capacity for survival. She is a fitting image for the theme for the annual meeting of the 2010 Oral History Association of "Times of Crisis; Times of Change: Human Sorties on the Edge of Transformation."

I intend to interview several examples of modern day "children" who might aptly be called children of Mother Courage. In particular I want to record the life and experiences of several women who lived through World War II in Europe and who, like Mother Courage, have the capacity to survive despite the odds, the hardships, and cost of war, and who ultimately endure and have even triumphed.

One "child," a German woman, was six years old when her entire family was bombed during the Allied attack on Dresden; another, a Swede, was evacuated to the countryside as a child for her protection when her country declared its neutrality in World War II; a third was a Latvian child who remembers that her family, prosperous middle class landowners, were far more frightened by the Soviets, than the Nazis and saw the devastation of rape as a weapon of warfare against women.

These and other examples of Mother Courage's children show how people get trapped and victimized by forces beyond their control as in war but somehow manage by their own initiative and the kindness of others to overcome their adversity. Their memories are "windows on human struggles" and show their resilience. They also illustrate the power of stories to "[force] a reckoning with the past as well as a reconsideration of the future" and "speak to both collective and contested understandings of life on the edge of transformation." It will be a deeply moving presentation.

Professor Jane Karoline Vieth

## Session 9.6 Political Cultures of the 196s and 197s

Craig Breaden and Chris Lopez

### "The Democratic Party Left Me": Reflections on Georgia's Two-Party Evolution

In 1962 Ronald Reagan famously uttered the words that continue to haunt Democrats: "I didn't leave the Democratic Party, the Democratic Party left me." That sentiment, adopted by an increasing number of Georgia Republicans, is charged by a history of segregation, explosive suburban development around Atlanta, and a steadfast conservative populism. Georgia's growth, from a one-party state where elections were decided in the Democratic primary, into a two-party state dominated recently by Republicans, has been pondered by pundits and researched by scholars, and puzzled over particularly by Democrats. Was it a reaction by conservative Democrats to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, or the result of a series of power plays based on reapportionment? Was it the result of hard work on the part of Georgia's Republican Party, which at mid-century tended toward a progressive anti-establishment/good government populism, or a late-century shift by the national Republican Party towards social conservatism?

Produced by the Russell Library at the University of Georgia, the video oral history series *Reflections on Georgia Politics* collects the stories of Georgia's political leaders and observers of the late twentieth century. The narratives are as distinct as each narrator, but in approaching the series we decided to have our interviewer -- veteran political advisor Bob Short -- ask the question, "How do you explain Georgia's evolution into a two-party state, and how would you characterize its impact?"

We will show a small number of clips from the series illustrating how this question has been answered by our narrators, and then address the issues attending this form of oral history, including the fact that our narrators are political insiders, the effectiveness of our interviewer Bob Short, the "on-camera" element of video oral history, and the effect that knowledge of online accessibility may play in our narrators' responses.

Nancy Pietroforte

### Rebel With a Cause: Bill Baird's Legal Challenges to Laws Governing "Chastity and Decency" and His Unyielding Pursuit of a Progressive Sexual and Reproductive Rights Agenda

This paper examines the personal and political life of pioneering activist Bill Baird in advancing a progressive sexual and reproductive rights agenda. U.S. Supreme Court scholars have long recognized that Baird's 1972 U.S. Supreme Court victory *Eisenstadt v. Baird* helped establish the legal groundwork – invoking a “privacy framework” – for subsequent Court cases including *Roe v. Wade*, *Doe v. Bolton*, and, more recently, *Lawrence v. Texas* (which broadened the rights of consenting adults regarding lawful sexual behavior).

The central focus of this paper is Baird's activism in the context of the social, historical, and political climate of the 1960s and 1970s. Particular attention is given to the period surrounding the *Eisenstadt v. Baird* decision. The research presented here is largely based on interviews with Bill Baird as well as with Joe Balliro and Joan Green – attorneys who represented Mr. Baird during most of this period.

Baird effectively challenged antiquated laws concerning sexuality and reproduction. By recognizing and seizing the political opportunity the 1960s and 1970s provided, Baird pursued a particularly radical agenda which ultimately culminated in securing *single* persons the constitutional right to birth control. Baird's "maverick" style enabled him to pursue a particularly unconventional approach to changing law. (While being part of a large, national organization would have enabled Baird to have access to a variety of resources, it would have also severely limited his radical approach.)

Craig Scott

### Community and Legislative Change: 1970s and Consensual Sex Legislation

In 1969 San Francisco California Assemblyman Willie Brown introduced Assembly Bill 743, which would legalize consensual sexual interactions between adults. The bill failed. Willie Brown reintroduced the bill year after year, and in 1975 Governor Brown signed the legislation into law. The law has been claimed as an early success in the gay liberation movement. Drawing on research including oral histories, the paper presented will document leaders and witnesses new visions of change and transformation and how oral histories supplement the current histiography.

## Session 9.7 Faith, Courage, Tenacity: Uncovering, Unmasking, and Untangling Stories of Pain, Protest and Power

K. Christine Pae

### From Forgetfulness to the Spirit of Courage: Korean Women's Story-telling of Sexual Slavery during the Time of War

While the history of war remembers the male warriors, who sacrificed their lives for the fatherland, this paper attempts to listen to the women, who survived through the times of conflict. More specifically, exploring the stories of Korean women who were forced to sexually cater to Japanese soldiers during World War II and to American soldiers in South Korea since World War II, the presenter delineates the subversive power of Korean women's story-telling. This paper will contemplate how Korean women (both the activists and the victims [or the workers] of military sex-industry) preserved women's wartime stories and challenged the public forgetfulness of the imperial domination over women's bodies, while the Korean nationalist propaganda has attempted to erase the realities of these

women, who were raped, displaced, and forced to work in the military sex-industry. This paper also includes the roles of religion in silencing these women and in liberating them from silence and forgetfulness. The presenter will highlight that Korean women's story-telling has created the spirit of resistance against the public forgetfulness of voiceless women; that Korean women have told their stories in hope of creating a new social order for younger generations; and that we need to consider transnational solidarity in preserving, re-telling, and recording women's wartime experiences.

AnneMarie Mingo

#### **Hearing Herstory through the Lives of Black Women Social Activists in Atlanta and Harlem**

Black Churchwomen have traditionally played a significant role as socio-religious activists within the Black community throughout much of the history of the United States. During the Civil Rights Era, many "everyday" women whose names were unknown, but whose effects were undeniable, engaged life from a place of liminality where they teetered in a spatiotemporal position between what is and what may become. This paper draws on the narratives of Black Churchwomen who, emboldened by the belief that they were working with God on the side of justice, committed themselves to long-lasting struggles that would ultimately produce social change in the United States. I argue that it was a theo-moral imagination that allowed these women to see things that were not yet as if they already were, and then work to make their visions a reality.

As "herstory" is heard in Atlanta and Harlem, the narratives that will be given priority in this paper are those of women who experienced the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s on the ground in various cities throughout the United States. The women whose social activist voices will speak through this work, are currently active in historical Black Churches in Atlanta and Harlem. The women reveal that there was often movement of bodies and movement of ideas throughout the "Movement," such that through the use of letters, Black owned newspapers, and by traveling "up South" or "down South," the issues that may initially appear geographically bound, are actually found to be informing their social activism more broadly. Alternative views the Civil Rights Era, which incorporate a particular socio-religious understanding, will be uncovered through the stories of pain, protest, and power as told by the women featured in this paper.

#### **Session 9.8 ROUNDTABLE: Has Feminist Oral History Lost Its Radical/Subversive Edge?**

Sherna Gluck

South African oral historian Sean Field's questioning if oral history had become respectable (2/09, IOHA debate), triggered a discussion among feminist oral historians about the radical/subversive nature of our work. Embedded in the women's liberation movement from the start and with a commitment to advocacy, could feminist oral history retain its potential without a robust radical women's liberation movement? As many of its practitioners and pioneers moved from the streets to the academy, did it become more institutionalized and lose its connection to activism?

As discussion of feminist oral history and even a reconsideration of its subversive/radical past has been the focus of online conversations among US and UK veteran practitioners for the past year, with the voices/views of new generations being added to the mix.

This ROUNDTABLE brings together members of two generations of practitioners to consider a series of questions on both the past nature of feminist oral history and its nature and direction today: Maylei Blackwell, Sherna Berger Gluck, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Rhonda Y. Williams.

#### **Session 11.2 Recalling and Recasting Meaning of the Great Depression**

Alison Baker

##### ***Saloon Songs for Hard Times***

The 30s produced a very rich flowering of American culture, including popular music. In this multi-media piece I focus on songs from the early thirties (1930-34), looking at how these songs reflected Americans' anger and despair in the darkest days of the Great Depression, and then also created a sense of community and lifted people's spirits up, giving them hope of better times to come. Excerpts from interviews with people remembering the Great Depression are interspersed with the songs, and photos from the 30's give a sense of what those hard times looked like, felt like.

The first three songs are all sung by Bing Crosby: Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? (1931), plaintive and angry; Dancing in the Dark (1930), existential wondering why we're here, but we can face the music together; and Pennies from Heaven (1934), things are looking up, but we have to go through dark times in order to appreciate the good times that are coming.

Crosby was America's most popular singer in the 30's. His voice blanketed the airwaves and his recordings topped the charts year after year. He created a new sound, very different from the singers shouting through megaphones or Al Jolson's belting. The microphone was Crosby's instrument, ideally suited to his nuanced, intimate style, and he "played" it expertly, like no-one else. By 1930 almost every household had a radio. The family would gather around in the evening, listening to Crosby's songs and FDR's fireside chats. For the first time, Americans felt a personal relationship with their president, and a connection to the nation as a whole. There was a sense of shared suffering, shared purpose, shared values, the beginnings of a national culture.

Next we jump to the current recession, and to people who invested all their money with Bernie Madoff, and were ruined when his Ponzi scheme collapsed in December of 2008. Cabaret singer Cynthia Crane sings Cab Calloway's How Big Can You Get? from her recent show John Denver, Bernie Madoff, and Me. The mood is angry, with one person to blame. Here, in photos and interview clips, we see parallels and differences between the early 30s and the current time.

Finally, Ella Fitzgerald sings Who Cares from the Gershwin's musical Of Thee I Sing (1930), with photos of the 30s juxtaposed with ones from the current recession, and a listing of song, interview, and photo credits.

The piece as a whole looks at the ways in which popular culture (especially popular music) expresses people's anger and anxiety in hard times, and can also lift people's spirits, bringing them together in a common purpose.

Alice Echols

### **Bringing It All Back Home: A Story of the Great Depression**

In 1932 hard times grew considerably harder in much of the nation, including Colorado, where one after another of the state's building and loan associations collapsed. The meltdown of Colorado Springs' B&L industry and the attendant scandal is the subject of my next book. *Shortfall: American Dreams from Boom to Bust* explores the texture of emotional life for those Americans upended by the turbulence of the 1920s and 1930s. It does so by asking how townspeople understood and absorbed that event and the "sudden shattering changes" of those years. *Shortfall* is about failure, which as historian Scott Sandage argues, isn't the "dark side" of the American Dream but rather constitutive of it. It's about how failure and the shame of failure haunts our culture, and haunted my family.

I have conducted many oral histories over the years, however, I have never written at length about the practice of oral history. Ironically, this may be a project in which my sole interview subject is my own mother, a woman whose father was the president of the largest B&L in town. This paper is about my conversations with my mother, who, several years ago, at age 92 and after a half-century of silence, spoke with me about the scandal. What motivated her to participate in this project? Can her example tell us anything about the phenomenology of scandal? Does her narrative--clear-sighted and unequivocal one moment and full of elisions and silences in the next, explain something, not just about her "hard times," but about the ways that Americans in the Thirties absorbed and understood their "hard times?" Although I cannot share the aural dimension of these interviews, I have a substantial archive of letters, telegrams, receipts, and photographs, images of which I plan to incorporate into my presentation.

Madeleine Hirsiger-Carr

### **A New Deal for Wakulla: Art and Marble in a Florida Swamp**

Philanthropist Ed Ball's Wakulla Springs lodge opened in September of 1937 and became the most elegant travel and rest stop south of Tallahassee, Florida. The story of how it came to be built on that particular site involves numerous local residents, and in particular African American neighbors for whom the spring was a backyard attraction during the Great Depression.

Through an interview with Emmett Butler who was a teenager at the time, it becomes apparent how eye-opening this construction site was when artisans, artists and craftsmen gathered to create an art- and marble-filled structure. Through his eyes this presentation examines the particularly opulent ceiling icons that have left a lasting legacy of the New Deal's "other side."

For the locals, including teenager Emmett Butler, this was an astonishing insight into the lives of white people. At home he and other workers were using outhouses, had neither running water nor electricity, and navigated the sandy roads with mules and wagons.

The lodge brought a glimpse of the modern age to all of Wakulla's rural people, regardless of ethnicity or background. Boilers generated electricity. A pump pushed water into an elevated storage tank. Windows, doors and other wood trim were made right there on site. Pink and gray marble bathrooms with indoor plumbing appeared at a time when outhouses were the norm. Guests stepped through brass doors onto an elevator that took them to their rooms on the second floor. All this activity transformed local concepts of what the future could look like and catapulted Emmett Butler into the modern world.

He presents a lively account of working as a bell hop and meeting guests from New Hampshire, Philadelphia and New York thus lending a different dimension to an interpretation of art in the swamps.

Andor Skotnes

### **The Great Crash and the Genesis of the Long Civil Rights Movement**

In recent years, scholars of Black history have questioned the hegemonic "Eyes on the Prize" narrative of the modern Civil Rights Movement: that the struggle emerged almost spontaneously in the middle 50s in response to the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board decision, taking off with the Montgomery Bus Boycott, then sweeping throughout the South into the North and West, and changing everything. However, as a number of historians have pointed out, the defining characteristics of the modern Civil Rights Movement—mass mobilization, mass organization, and direct action coordinated with litigation—characterized the freedom movement of the World War II years. Some have noted that the same characteristics were central to the resurgent freedom movement of the last half of the 30s. And a few, myself included, have proposed that the founding moments of the modern Civil Rights Movement can be found in the turmoil directly following the Great Crash. In short, it is arguable that the Civil Rights Movement—some are now calling it the "Long Civil Rights Movement (LCRM)"—dates from the early 30s, not from the mid 50s.

Oral history research is crucial to answering the question of the origins of the LCRM. In my own work, which mainly concerns the 20th century struggles in Maryland, interviews have been the key to discovering the character of freedom movement activities in the 1930s and 1940s that went un- or under-recorded elsewhere. In this paper, I will draw on the results of this work and that of other historians, to argue the case that the LCRM originated in the early 1930s, and to explain why this is important. And I will discuss the role oral history has played in making this case.

### Session 11.3     Collecting Stories from the Vulnerable: The Ethics of Trauma, Community, and Privacy in Oral History

Carolyn Lumsford Mears

#### **Preparing for the Descent into Hell: Collecting Stories of Traumatic Experience**

Documenting stories of trauma and recovery provides an opportunity to observe the significance and the impact of events on people's lives and to better understand the processes by which people reconstruct order out of chaos. By its very nature, trauma research challenges the investigator to enter a troubling and potentially dangerous world. Recent decisions regarding the exclusion of oral history projects from oversight by Institutional Review Boards do not mean that OH research is without risk. Indeed, in some cases, there can be great risk—both to the narrator and to the interviewer. This type of research requires great sensitivity, forethought, and an understanding of the nature of trauma and its effects.

To prepare for my own OH work on the aftermath of the Columbine tragedy, I researched the psychology of trauma, thus learning key factors that can affect any OH project that involves traumatized individuals. In addition to questions of ethics, the researcher needs to be aware of such common characteristics as aphasia (disruption of fluency and language), the prevalence of a trauma membrane (which creates a sense of separation from others and from one's own experience), and the loss of the assumptive world (the set of assumptions that are conditional to relationships and pursuit of life's course). Also, the increase of defensive mechanisms that stem from victimization, the disruption of long- and short-term memory, the potential for re-traumatization, the emotional weight carried by those hearing stories of sorrow and loss, and other factors must be addressed.

This presentation will explore these key considerations and will offer specific suggestions for documenting stories of traumatic experience without putting the narrator or the researcher at increased risk.

### Session 11.5     Talking with Scientists: Using Oral History to Document the History of Science

Erica Stefanovich

#### **Collective Recollection of Change in Industrial Science**

As public access to public private lives increases, so do privacy concerns and the fear that what is contained in an oral history will come back to haunt the interviewees. As professionally connected individuals, they will be especially sensitive during an interview when discussing conflict and controversy. Conducting an oral history of a scientist is not necessarily about the science that they conduct, but gives a face and a voice to a subject often shrouded in jargon. The realities of science often lead to intense conflicts and strange decisions not explained in technical publications and press releases. These rich stories would often be lost if not for oral history, but how do we get subjects to discuss these conflict openly when they are still so tied to the communities they occurred in? And how do we get perspective out of these subjects when the conflicts often evoke strong emotions or negative reflections?

My paper looks at the Gordon Moore Collection at CHF for an example. Gordon Moore is a co-founder of the Intel Corporation, but even before that time he played an important role in the formation of Silicon Valley. Almost every company in Silicon Valley since the 1950s can be traced back to their roots in Fairchild Semiconductors, a company that took less than a year to take over the market but quickly fell apart. The disparate perspectives shown in this collection give us interesting insight into why and how this change happened. Each interviewee had a different perspective on the subject, but it is clear that personal connections and competition played a key role. The further we get from the event, the more we risk losing the stories that truly explain the decisions that led to Fairchild's rapid market rise and decline. It is only as a whole that these interviews give an accurate view of the many personal decisions that led to a breakdown that so greatly impacted the world that we live in.

Mame Warren

#### **An English Major in Orbit: Recording 50 Years of Space Research**

Recording interviews with the pioneers and current practitioners of research beyond Earth's atmosphere proved a daunting task for this veteran oral historian. Charged with producing a book encompassing 50 years of space research for the Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory, I interviewed numerous physicists, scientists, and engineers. Some were there at the dawn of the space age; some had the audacity to land the spacecraft they conceived, designed, and built on a near-Earth asteroid; others imagined and are currently executing missions to Mercury and Pluto. Beginning each interview with a confession of having been an English major, I was able to capture thoughtful commentaries in clear language, documenting their passion, persistence, and pride in their work as well as recording their determination to continue after numerous heartbreaking failures.

## Session 11.6     The Politics of Social Space

Terry Easton

### **Breaking the Chain, Raising our Voices: The Imperial Hotel Occupation as Prophetic Politics**

This presentation discusses the June, 1990, activist occupation of an abandoned hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. At the time of the occupation the hotel was owned by architect John Portman, an influential figure in Atlanta's downtown development.

By the spring of 1990 the number of homeless people in Atlanta had increased to more than 10,000. Social justice activists, led by Open Door Community and its political arm People for Urban Justice (PUJ), grew increasingly frustrated by what they considered a city administration and business community that ignored the plight of the city's poor populations.

With a commitment to taking their Christian-inspired social justice beliefs to the streets to disrupt "business as usual," PUJ decided to break into the abandoned Imperial Hotel and raise a banner from the top floor windows that said "House the Homeless Here." The sign, and the accompanying rally on Peachtree Street, was designed to bring media attention to the city's failure to provide affordable housing. The protestors expected to be arrested and taken away by early afternoon, but the police did not arrest or remove them. This unlikely turn of events initially stunned PUJ. They rebounded and decided to remain in the hotel until their demands were met or until they were forcefully removed. Later in the afternoon, PUJ opened the door of the hotel to homeless people. By early evening they had decided to remain through the night. That one night turned into sixteen nights: The occupation of the Imperial Hotel.

In this presentation I use oral history and archival material to discuss the occupation from the point of view of PUJ activists.

Claytee White

### **The Voices of John S. Park: Empowering a Neighborhood through the National Registry of Historic Places Process**

John S. Park was the first neighborhood to be listed as a historic district on the city of Las Vegas' Historic Register and later, included on the National Register of Historic Places. Strategic organizing of the area by the city along with the National Registry process allowed the residents to become empowered politically, socially and civilly. The neighborhood possesses an historical, cultural, and socioeconomic complexity that is rare in a city which is rapidly suburbanizing and sprawling into the surrounding desert. The community began in the late 1930s as whites moved out of the downtown core but still remained in the downtown area. World War II stopped the process because of the lack of building materials but construction resumed in 1946. The streets that surround the small enclave are Charleston on the north to St. Louis Avenue on the south, Las Vegas Boulevard on the west to Maryland Parkway; approximately 16 blocks. The 168 homes vary in styles from Colonial Revival (Cape Cod Cottage), Neocolonial, Tudor, Neo-Tudor, Minimal Traditional, and finally the Traditional and Contemporary Ranch.

The reason we decided to conduct an oral history of the neighborhood is because a major segment of the community was settled, in the past 30 years, by UNLV (University of Nevada Las Vegas) staff, especially young professors. One of those professional couples, Deborah Boehm and Patrick Jackson, witnessed the intersecting themes of the area – gender, class, race/ethnicity, religion, local politics, sexuality, age and generation, gentrification and forming communities, living in a historically preserved area, and a growing artistic element – and thought this time and place should be captured in some manner that could involve community members. Wisely, they contacted me at the campus' Oral History Research Center, wrote a grant proposal and as they say, the rest is rapidly becoming history. This project challenges Las Vegas' reputation as a city of new neighborhoods and constant reconstruction, and captures the history of an area that has been – and continues to be – intricately intertwined with the development and identity of Las Vegas.

The project was designed to capture stories and historical facts by featuring individuals who represent the many communities that make up the John S. Park area – long-term residents including original homeowners along with gentrifiers. This original neighborhood that consist of local politicians, business people, employees of the gaming industry and Mormons have been joined by members of the gay community, Latino immigrants, UNLV professionals, artists and gallery owners. Today it is one of the most identifiably diverse areas of the city. Still, surprisingly, it lacks members of the African American community.

The questions developed were designed to provided an interdisciplinary perspective on community and the meanings residents attach to the neighborhood by drawing on multiple disciplinary traditions, especially History and Cultural Anthropology. From a historic perspective, the project documents important events, changes over time and political protests. Informed by cultural anthropological theories, the project captures cultural and social dimension of the area by exploring concepts of community, identity, space and place, processes of social change, and trends of urban neighborhoods.

We learned from the audio interviews and video round table discussions collected in this socially significant residential area of Greater Las Vegas that the neighborhood association formed the foundation for developing community. Definitions of 'community' being used in our research include a geographical space within which are elements of solidarity, commitment, mutuality and trust where residents have common interests that comprise religious beliefs, sexual orientation, occupation and lifestyle. The early neighborhood association was formed when the neighborhood began to destabilize, as children left for college, original families began to move, rentals increased and criminal activity grew. Gradually though professionals from UNLV, the homosexual community and artists began to claim some of the properties.

The event that began to bring the disparate neighborhood together was a threat from the Las Vegas Strip. At the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Sahara (the dividing line separating the county from the city) stands the Stratosphere Hotel Casino, about three blocks from the John S. Park community's southwestern boundary. In 1999, the owner, Bob Stupak, wanted to add a 1,200 room time-share property shaped as an oversized replica of the *Titanic*. The 400-foot high resort would straddle Las Vegas Boulevard, with a seven-story parking garage on one side and a 100,000-square-foot "iceberg" containing a shopping area next to the replica of the ship. In a 5 – 0 vote, the city's Planning Commission rejected Stupak's proposal that would have stood on the east side of Las Vegas Boulevard at Park Paseo Street just a bit south of Charleston Boulevard. The loudest voice raised to sway the commissioners was Mary Haush, UNLV professor and resident of the John S. Park community. Her house located on 5<sup>th</sup> Place would have faced the rear door of the proposed structure. "These 280-foot towers are going to drop a shadow on the homes to the east," Haush said. "These are some of the oldest homes in Las Vegas and a lot of people have put in a lot of work to restore them and build a nice community. This project is out of place here."

Standing behind Haush was a united community. Residents attended in such record numbers that the Planning Commission and the City Council hesitate in casting their votes. In Haush's interview for this project, she remembered that a few people from the neighborhood association went to their city councilman, Gary Reese, to request his support against the building of the *Titanic*. Councilman Reese told the group that "if you show me that the community is opposed to it, I will be opposed to it and generally other member of the City Council go with the wishes of the people who represent the area." So Haush recalled that, "we went door-to-door to get signatures and people were overwhelmingly opposed to it." She also explained how time consuming that process became. "You couldn't get three houses in a row of people being at home at the same time so you had to keep going back over and over again."

Interestingly Mary Haush spearheaded the *Titanic* Public Relations campaign. Her background in journalism, working with one of the city's local newspapers, *The Review Journal*, taught her that the community might require more than a door-to-door campaign against a proposal from such a well known businessman. Thus, she began to contact friends from her years with the newspaper. "One of the things I did was invite John L. Smith [well known local newspaper columnist] to my home for lunch and took him for a prearranged walk around the neighborhood. John and I stopped at a couple of houses and people said, 'Oh, would you like to see my house?' And I got people from different TV stations to come out and I planned neighbors for them to talk to." As previously stated, the Planning Commission unanimously voted against Stupak and when the issue went before the City Council, it was only supported by the then-mayor Jan Jones probably because Stupak was such a staunch supporter of her political career.

This was only the beginning. A few months later, when the city hired planners to begin to develop communities, John S. Park was the first to get an assigned planner and ironically, when Yargo Kagafas accepted the position and moved to Las Vegas, he chose John S. Park as a place to live. He would guide the community through a Neighborhood Planning process and later to a place on the National Registry of Historic Places. This Neighborhood Planning process was rapidly abandoned by the City of Las Vegas after the success of John S. Park probably because the community became and remains too powerful. They successfully fight and win battles that are routinely lost in neighborhood after neighborhood in other parts of the city.

Susan Clemens-Bruder and Judith Ridner

#### **Divided but not Defeated: Urban "Renewal", Race Politics, and the African-American Community of Allentown, Pennsylvania**

Like many postwar industrial cities of the northeast, Allentown, Pennsylvania launched two major urban "renewal" projects during the 1960s. One of them targeted the city's primary African-American neighborhood located just south of the downtown.

For the African-American families who had long made their homes in this neighborhood, this project had intense personal meaning. It meant forced relocation from their homes and banishment from one of the only neighborhoods in the city where they were accepted as residents.

Seeing this as a crisis, some African-American residents united to protest the city's plans and dispute the prices offered them for their homes. Citing the racist assumptions that undergirded the project, and arguing that patterns of residential segregation would prevent them from finding new places in the city to live, they fought the city's plans from the 1960s into the 1970s.

Yet, not all of the city's African-Americans supported such resistance. Some, including one prominent local Baptist minister, saw renewal and relocation as an opportunity. For him, the city was offering African-Americans a chance to move up and gain access to many of the city's best, or at least better, neighborhoods.

Using oral history interviews conducted with Allentown residents, our paper explores how and why urban renewal divided Allentown's black community. It also focuses on the role racial politics played in shaping the city's plans and how class influenced African-American reactions to what was happening to them. In the end, by discussing how contentious a process urban renewal was within the city and its African-American community, we hope to demonstrate why Allentown's experience is both representative and unique of its time and place.

## **Space, struggle, and memory in Philadelphia's Chinatown**

In the late nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants sought refuge in an area of downtown Philadelphia that evolved into a neighborhood of families served by active community institutions. As city planning agencies turned to downtown revitalization in the 1960s, Chinatown's population continued to grow but the area – deemed “not Chinese enough to warrant redevelopment” itself – was threatened with encroachment by the numerous renewal projects that sprang up around its borders. Activism saved the neighborhood from destruction when residents joined together to an effort to “Save Chinatown” and preserve the neighborhood as a living community. Today, memories of this struggle inform current attempts at community development, and “Save Chinatown” is often invoked when new threats face the community (most recently, a proposed nearby casino). Oral history also plays a role in maintaining these memories of struggle and the spaces associated with them, presenting a powerful counter narrative to the ahistorical representation of the neighborhood within local tourism and redevelopment discourse. Drawing on oral history interviews with community activists and long-time residents, this paper will explore the spatial inscription of memories of crisis and transformation in Philadelphia's Chinatown and the way in which those who live, work or advocate on behalf of Chinatown locate themselves, through memory, within a tradition of struggle, offering alternative visions of the neighborhood landscape that they work to preserve.

## **Session 11.7 Exploring Change through Education, Art, and Oral History in Harlem**

For over 75 years, the Apollo Theater has been part of the legacy of Harlem in New York City. As one of the primary connections between Harlem's past and present, the Apollo is at the forefront of a resurgence of arts and cultural in the community as well as a forum for the exchange of social and political ideas.

To help New York City students better understand and appreciate the history of Harlem and be able to reflect on the present and future of the community, the Apollo Theater Education Program created the Oral History Project. Initiated in 2007 at the Harriet Tubman Learning Center, the Oral History Project engages 4th and 5th grade students in activities that increase their knowledge and understanding of the history of Harlem. The Project allows students to compare and contrast events of the past and present and use this information to explore the future of the community and their role in it. Most importantly, the Project connects students with a group of older adults, The Significant Elders, comprised of men and women who have lived and/or worked in Harlem for much or all of their lives and who have experienced first-hand times of crisis and times of change in the community.

The process of collecting the oral histories of elders in Harlem has given teachers and students at the Harriet Tubman Learning Center a new lens which to view history.

During our presentation at this year's Oral History Association Annual Conference, attendees will hear from the Apollo's education staff, a classroom teacher, the Teaching Artist and students about how the Oral History Project was conceived, and the impact that it has made on participants. We will share our process and provide information on successes, outcomes, growth and lessons learned over the past three years.

## **Session 11.8 Race, Class, Gender, and Work**

Barbara Morris

### **The Civil Rights Movement and Labor Relations at Bethlehem Steel, 1960–1969**

Union steelworkers struggled to reshape labor relations and race relations in the steel industry after passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It was a period of dramatic economic and social change in the era of civil rights and post-war deindustrialization in the steel industry. The period of the mid to late 1960s is of particular importance as this era saw a revolution, also witnessed race riots in Baltimore and the rise of the Black Power ideology. What role did steel workers and Civil Rights activists play in the changing world of the steel industry? At Baltimore's Sparrow's Point Bethlehem Steel plant, minorities and unions struggled to refine the United Steel Workers Union in this changing world. My thesis will focus on the interplay of workers in this shifting landscape. I plan to use oral histories as the major source in this investigation, along with traditional archival materials available in the Baltimore and Washington region such as official documents from the newly formed Office of Federal Contract Compliance in the Labor Department. Through this process, I will be able to discover their plans of action for equal opportunity and pay to both races. Concurrently, I will also research what Bethlehem Steel had to endure during this time. For example, what price did they have to pay to adhere to the new Civil Rights Law – not only monetarily, but in keeping the white men from work shortages or striking? For example, did union workers gain upward mobility during a period when the country was facing a revolution in race relations? Did the foreshadowing of the major deindustrialization of the steel industry play a role in labor and race relations? In my thesis, I aim to tell at least some of the stories that have been overlooked in this important era in labor and civil rights history.

Anne Balay

### **Steel Closets: Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual steelworkers in Gary, Indiana**

There's something inherently masculine about being a steelworker. The scale is vast, the work is dirty and dangerous, and the industry has a timelessness – it feels somehow prehistoric, existing apart from the social changes that have transformed the rest of the world. In addition, steelworkers have historically been almost exclusively men, so their work culture is aggressive, ribald, and almost exaggeratedly macho. Given this background, what experiences do gay and lesbian people who work in the mills share? I have finished oral histories of 15 queer steelworkers, and I will present my initial findings.

First of all, these people are very closeted. One describes himself as not even gay at work – he excises that part of his identity. And all, men and women alike, are very masculine. They survive the endless queer-baiting mostly by participating, and giving back as good as they get. Women deal directly with problems that occur – those female steelworkers that survive on the job are those that don't ask for help or legal recourse – they respond immediately and physically when threatened. They challenge the men who at their own game. And they love it. Thriving in this atmosphere thrills these women – making it in this male world gives them a charge that I could feel as they talked.

Men similarly enjoy their jobs, and the challenges and triumphs they involve, but they often pay a price for the hiding they must do. Many are alcoholics, they all feel very lonely at work, and they have a hard time maintaining meaningful relationships.

I end by discussing why the mills are so inhospitable to gay people. Beyond the obvious, what about this culture causes that fear? And given that situation, how can I, as a researcher, find and make contact with, more interview subjects?

### **Session 12.1      ROUNDTABLE: The Interviewers Talk Back: Reflections on "Behind the Veil" as a Transformative Experience**

#### **The Interviewers Talk Back: Reflections on "Behind the Veil" as a Transformative Experience**

Interviewers who worked on "Behind the Veil: Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South" reflect on the impact of their participation on their scholarship, teaching, public work, and understanding of history. Coordinated by the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, the BTV project employed graduate students to collect the reminiscences of elderly black southerners. Between 1993-1995 interviewers recorded more than 1,200 interviews, all of them now archived at Duke University's Special Collections Library and repositories in the communities where interviews occurred. In this roundtable, BTV interviewers discuss a variety of intellectual, methodological, and professional issues related to their participation in the project and their subsequent work as historians and oral historians. By bringing attention to the experiences of interviewers, this session illuminates the educational, professional, and personal value of the field work process and of participation in a documentary project such as this. Furthermore, as teachers, scholars, public historians and documentarians, the BTV interviewers have had the opportunity to pass on this learning and shape the opinions of students and the public about oral history, African American history, and the Jim Crow South. Creating an opportunity for discussion of these topics, this forum should be of interest, relevance, and usefulness to the larger community of oral historians at the OHA conference.

### **Session 12.2      Witnesses to Change: Oral History and the African American Experience in the 20th Century**

Althea Legal-Miller

#### **"The unmentionable ugliness of the jailhouse": Black girls Protesters, Sexualized Violence, and the Leesburg Stockade Imprisonment of 1963**

While scholars and writers have appreciated the centrality of mass jail-ins to the civil rights movement, the individualized experiences of jail-going volunteers have been largely omitted from histories and popular memory. In the absence of such narratives, the history of gendered and sexualized jailhouse terrorism – as perpetrated by white male law-enforcers against incarcerated female civil rights workers – cannot be adequately comprehended. This paper reconstructs the 1963 jailing of approximately thirty-six pre- and adolescent black girls from Americus, Georgia, who were arrested for participating in civil rights protests and subsequently jailed for six weeks in a dilapidated stockade in Leesburg, Georgia. Oral histories conducted with six African American women who were jailed in the Leesburg Stockade provide crucial insights on how sexualized violence was employed to curtail activism, and consolidate the racial and gender hierarchies of white supremacy. A close analysis of the Leesburg Stockade jailing also draws attention to the dialectics of struggle and agency, and crucially recovers how girls sought to reaffirm their humanity through bonds of sisterhood and rising militancy. This paper attempts to broaden the study of black girls' participation in the civil rights movement, tracking the formation of female adolescence on the precarious frontlines of social transformation.

### **Session 12.3      Excavating Memories of World War II**

Rachel Deblinger

#### **Holocaust Testimony Before Holocaust History: David Boder and the Displaced Persons of Postwar Europe**

Dr. David Boder, a Latvian-born psychologist working at the Illinois Institute of Technology, traveled to Europe in 1946 and interviewed 109 Displaced Persons (DP) on a wire recorder, including Jewish concentration camp survivors, Baltic displaced workers, and Mennonites escaping from Soviet Russia. Recorded in over seven languages, Boder's collection of interviews documented the experiences of what we now know as the Holocaust. In 1949, he published *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, which included eight translated interview transcriptions. Between 1950 - 1957, Boder self-published 70 transcripts in a five-volume series entitled *Topical autobiographies of displaced people: recorded verbatim in displaced persons camps*.

The first orally recorded collection of Holocaust testimonies, Boder's work is a remarkable example of the multiple forms of memory created immediately following the war. The immediacy with which survivors wrote, spoke, and shared in the first few years after the war marks a period of Holocaust memory distinct from later postwar testimonies in which an openness and candor preserve themes

that later become taboo, like revenge and Jewish violence. Exploring the specific moment of Boder's interview trip and the challenges that both Boder and the survivors faced in communicating with one another reveals that testimony needs to be understood in the context in which it was collected. As such, this paper will examine the limitations of recording Holocaust memory in DP camps, recognizing how the constraints of postwar life framed survivor narratives and address how Boder's methodology and his lack of knowledge about the Holocaust shaped the narratives he collected.

#### Session 12.4 Art, Music, and Community

John Burdick

##### **Indexing the Life Narrative: Bourdieu's Art Networks, Abstract Expressionism, and The Martha Jackson Oral History Project**

A pioneer during the post-World War II American art scene, Martha K. Jackson was a prominent Abstract Expressionist gallery owner in mid twentieth century New York. At a time when few thought of buying original contemporary art, Jackson and her 59th Street Gallery became a hub of both commercial art as well as work rich in artistic innovation. Artists such as Jackson Pollack, Willem de Kooning, Hans Hoffman, Michael Goldberg, Norman Bluhm, and Louise Nevelson, are now household names thanks in many parts to the life of Martha Jackson. As a leader of the development of modern art in America she added deeply to the growth of Abstract Expressionism as an artistic movement, all the while firmly impacting New York's rise to eminence in the global art scene.

The Martha Jackson Oral History Project is an ongoing effort, by the University at Buffalo Art Galleries in collaboration with Randforce Associates LLC, to situate this single biographical figure within rich context. Through a lengthy series of interviews, the project aims to document the life of this visionary woman and the ways in which she used the market to promote the cause of modern art in the United States. Although still in its early stages, the project plans to eventually include over sixty interview subjects ranging from family, friends, employees and artists. The audio of each interview session will be digitally documented, cataloged, and indexed in a manner that will make the material accessible for exploration at various levels of curiosity and research. By providing both digital and print summaries of these interview sessions, an aim of this project is to make the interviews manageable directly through an interactive audio collection installed in the UB Art Gallery.

Yet, the aim of this presentation is not to primarily focus on the larger intents of the Martha Jackson Oral History Project, or even to detail the life of this highly influential and engrossing figure. Rather the objective will be is to address the manner in which the specific process of digitally indexing, or "clipping" the interview sessions which compose her life narrative create a more accessible and researchable work of oral history. To achieve this goal, the presentation will essentially be divided in two distinct sections. The first will be a detailing a process and benefits of digitally indexing and cataloguing of the preliminary interviews of the Martha Jackson Oral History Project. In order to further conceptualize the indexing process, the second section of the presentation will be an exploration of the utilization of those digitally indexed audio files within the contexts of specific research of her life narrative.

In the first half of the presentation, detailed will be the process of digitally dividing, cataloguing, clipping and tagging highlights within each interview. Through the use of digital audio software such as Interclipper, the process of "clipping" will be focused on, which involves a series of highlighting of audio segments in the interview followed by the creation of a brief text summarizing the clip. The benefits of this sort of digital processing of the audio files will also be explored, including allowing the researcher to sift through extensive audio files with greater ease and to skip irrelevant information through a simple process of searching the summaries of "clipped" audio files. Thus removing some of the frustrations typically associated with either listening to the interview in its entirety or more rudimentary text based searching of interview transcripts.

In order to illustrate the value of this type of digital indexing, addressed in the later portions of the presentation will be a series of secondary research with the Martha Jackson Oral History Project in regards to social networking in the Abstract Expressionist art community. The position of Martha Jackson as an upper class woman who owned an art gallery, proved to be an ideal case study for an exploration of Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical assertions about art networks, field theory and art salons, which he lays out in his now seminal text *Les règles de l'art* or *The Rules of Art*. Explored will be the manner in which the process of digitally indexing these interviews, allowed for an ease of research of Bourdieu's social theories. An exploration of Jackson's posthumous life narrative through Bourdieu's theories would have been a difficult process due to the lengthy and complex nature of the interviews themselves. The manner in which the interviews were highlighted and documented in the digital manner proved to be of great worth in this research endeavor. Thus, the exploration of social networking in Martha Jackson's life will be utilized as a prime example to illustrate the value of digital indexing or "clipping" especially in regards to a life narrative or larger oral history project.

Joanna Hay

##### **Bernard Greenhouse: 20<sup>th</sup> Century cellist; 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher**

Beaux Arts Trio cellist Bernard Greenhouse remains extraordinarily active at age 94. His career as a performer, with his Stradivarius cello, spans much of the 20th century, over which he made significant contributions to music in America. His influence continues into the 21st century as he teaches some of the world's top cello students. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) initiated this video oral history project about Greenhouse to add to its Cello Collection at the Jackson Library. UNCG Cello Music Cataloger, Mac Nelson, and oral history videographer Joanna Hay, traveled to Wellfleet Massachusetts in the summer of 2009 to film the famous cellist.

Mac Nelson and Joanna Hay will present an excerpt of the resulting film, "Song of The Birds" in which Greenhouse works with 11-year old South Korean cellist HaYoung Choi. Mr. Nelson will discuss his reasons for embarking upon an oral history project focusing on the Cello Music Collection at UNCG. The medium of video enhances access to the work of these artists, reaching younger audiences and researchers through full-interview forms as well as the short, edited piece. Eventually, the University Libraries will make the interviews and short film available online.

Ms. Hay will discuss the technical challenges of capturing high quality digital video and audio on location. She traveled with a mobile studio which included an HD camera, lighting, five microphones and a mixer. During the three days in Wellfleet, Hay and Nelson conducted two formal oral history interviews, reviewed photographs and letters, (many from Greenhouse's mentor, Pablo Casals) and captured several hours of B-roll of lessons, barbecues, and scenery which are used in the final film.

This oral history project illustrates the transformative power of music and its ability to reach across the generations.

Marta Marciiniak

#### **Dead Buffalo, New York: Demolished Live Music Venues In A Former Metropolis**

In Buffalo, the largest city in Western New York, the musicians operating in the independent punk scene interviewed by me last year looked back on the shape of the scene from several years ago with considerable nostalgia. Their memories of live music venues that have closed down comprise the core of this project, along with an inquiry into the larger context of these negative changes they witnessed and regretted. One such contextual assumption was the connection of this local "subcultural downturn" with the economic crisis that has been under way in the United States over the past couple of years. Ultimately, there appeared other factors and causes for this "downturn" that seem peculiar to Buffalo.

Among the fundamental questions posed before embarking on this project were: what are the perceived reasons for the venues' disappearance? How are they remembered and what meanings do people attach to them and their disappearance? The assumption behind these was that live venues provide the backbone for the robust functioning of this kind of subcultural community; some become social institutions or more, while others evoke mixed feelings; disappointment, or failure.

The paper contains factual historical data of local import as well as general reflections on the processes that the subcultural community underwent in recent years. Respondents belong to the group of musicians that comprises a substantial part of the local punk scene, two members of non-punk bands and two organizers. Hopefully this oral history project and its reverberations in the form of my feedback into the community will benefit its members by addressing the issues that lie at its heart. My involvement with the Buffalo scene will hopefully also continue because oral history should be concerned with the stories of local people whose efforts are directed toward preserving and developing this vital part of alternative culture.

**Joseph M. Turrini**

#### **They Are What They Say They Are? Oral Narratives and Collective Memory in the History of Punk Rock**

The publication of Please Kill Me Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk, began a trend in the emerging history of punk rock. Since its publication in 1996, a number of similar edited volumes of punk rock oral histories, based on a particular geography, timeframe, or musical subgenre, have appeared that are modeled to a large degree on the format utilized by Leg McNeil and Gillian McCain, the editors of Please Kill Me. This essay explores the creation and transmission of collective memory in the history of punk rock through the publication format of these particular oral history books. It argues that the use of oral history and the format derives from two unrelated phenomenon. First, the style, format, and production of the oral history books is utilized because it coheres with the do-it-yourself ethic, one of the primary long lasting legacies that came from punk rock culture. Second, the publications also resulted at least partly as a response to a perceived lack of appreciation of the historic legacy of punk from authors outside of the punk community. The publication of these oral history books is an effort of participants to fashion their own historical legacy and to shape the collective memory of punk rock.

### **Session 12.6      Culture, Conflict and Environment**

Mary E. Kohler

#### **Onondaga Lake: Landscape of Peace and Pollution**

For thousands of years, the Onondaga Nation and their ancestors occupied the area around Onondaga Lake. This body of water not only provided sustenance to the people and wildlife of the area, the Onondaga considered it a sacred site. Soon after the arrival of European colonists, Onondaga Lake became a center of industrial development and a dumping ground for various pollutants. Through the examination of oral histories, missionary journals, and other historical documents, this paper will juxtapose two cultures and their different views of the lake area. This research will suggest that by incorporating the environment back into our stories and history, it will transform our culture and environmental awareness.

Linda J Jencson

### **Landscapes with No Names: the Essential Presence of photographs to Accompany Narratives of Flood Crises in the Red River Valley**

Folklorists have noted the recurring theme of objects out of place in disaster narratives (Danielson 1990). Disasters, after all, displace things. Not the least of these objects and persons are displaced intentionally by those striving to mitigate the disaster. Furthermore, many of these displacements are transitory: the wall of sandbags saves lives for a week, and then comes down; ice formations melt away; technologies devised on the spot are torn apart to plant a rose bed; citizens organize for a day or a month to accomplish miracles, and then disperse.

Many of the constructions, inventions, social groupings and objects on the landscape are so transitory that no common words in the national language exist to define them, although they may acquire local nicknames. How do you tell your story to outsiders when many objects and associations crucial to the tale have no names?

This paper explores the use of digital and printed photographs used by informants in the telling of oral histories of the 1997 and 2009 flood fights in the Red River Valley of the North, in the twin cities of Fargo, ND, and Moorhead, MN. When I arrived in their homes for scheduled interviews, the majority of my citizen respondents simply brought out the pictures without being asked. The task of telling their stories was unthinkable without photographic accompaniment. I found further that the purpose of these images is not limited to the commonly noted oral history functions of memory stimulation, emotional evocation, and identity formation (Spencer 2007; James and Lobato 2004), although they perform these functions quite well.

Personal photographs of the Red River floods actually serve as the only way to carry the story when words fail. Photographs (and drawn images) become key narrative elements when the tools, constructions, and human groupings central to the narrative are so outside the everyday range of experience that they have no names.

David Todd

### **Economic Crisis, Environmental Challenge and Sustainable Future in Texas**

This session draws from the book, "The Texas Legacy Project: Stories of Courage and Conservation" (Texas A&M Press, 2010), and the online archive at [www.texaslegacy.org](http://www.texaslegacy.org), containing over 225 oral histories from Texas conservationists, collected from 1997 through 2008 in more than 60 communities across the state. In his talk, David Todd, interviewer for the oral histories and co-editor of the book, relates stories of environmental damage told by individuals who confronted entrenched industries and long-lived traditions in Texas. These were challenges that were often seen, at the time, as major economic crises for the status quo. Examples of these challenges included flooding and urban development, radioactive waste and military installations, habitat protection and the timber industry, game laws and subsistence hunting, and bird kills and the oil business. In these five examples, oral histories show how dominant industries and cultures collide with environmental problems. Beyond the picture we gain of these large-scale, society-wide collisions of tradition and change, of private industries and public interests, oral histories also give us intimate views of how the individual narrators faced personal turmoil and social exile when they spoke truth to power. Finally, the interviewees' words have a prophetic value in seeing beyond today's collisions and challenges, into a more sustainable future, in understanding how these conflicts can be resolved with solutions that lead to safer, less wasteful, and more sustainable resource use.

## **Session 12.7      Conflict and Change on Capitol Hill: Bringing Behind-the Scene Stories to the Internet**

Julia Collins Howington

### **Remembering Congressman Joe Moakley (D-MA): Curating an Oral History Project with Members of the U.S. House of Representatives**

Oral history has been and continues to be an effective tool in examining complex institutions such as the United States Congress. And, increasingly, the Internet plays an important role in disseminating information to our technologically-savvy users. New Web-based tools, such as blogs, wikis and Facebook, provide researchers with more opportunities to access and interact with our content, changing the user's role from passive reader to interactive participant. Accordingly, how we "curate" our collections must evolve: the question becomes how much change is needed?

Congressman John Joseph "Joe" Moakley's career in public service spanned 50 years and influenced the shape of government and the lives of his constituents. Since 2001, the John Joseph Moakley Archive and Institute has collected 74 interviews that expand the existing documentation of the Congressman's life by recording the observations and opinions of eyewitnesses around particular themes including Moakley's life, his public service career, and public policy issues such as El Salvador's civil war and Boston's desegregation crisis. The narrators include members of Congress, congressional professional staff (Washington and Massachusetts), plus Moakley's family, friends, and constituents.

The interview transcripts and a selection of recordings have been posted online since 2003. By relying on these somewhat static Web pages, we found that we were not keeping up with Web 2.0 technologies or with the expectations of our primary users, undergraduate students. This paper will report on the transition of our oral history site from static to dynamic, discussing our internal policy decisions, technology implementation, and the balancing act of meeting our users where they are while preserving the authority and integrity of our content.

Kathleen Johnson

### **Breaking Barriers and Witnessing Conflict: Oral History in the U.S. House**

In 2004, the Office of History and Preservation established the first oral history program for the U.S. House of Representatives. Created to make the rich heritage of the House of Representatives more accessible to Members, staff, scholars, and the general public, the program includes interviews with a wide variety of House employees. In late 2009, the Office of History and Preservation placed a select group of its oral histories online. The new oral history Web site has complete interview transcripts, interviewee biographies, audio and video clips, as well as artifacts and photographs. This presentation will feature segments of the Web site, most especially short audio and video clips of people directly involved in conflict and change affecting the nation, such as Frank Mitchell, the first African-American Page for the U.S. House, Tina Tate, the first woman to direct the House Radio-TV Gallery, Bill Goodwin, a House Page and eyewitness to the 1954 shooting in the House Chamber, and Glenn Rupp, a House Page who observed the Bonus March protest at the Capitol in 1932. Additionally, Cokie Roberts, congressional correspondent and the daughter of two former Representatives (Hale and Lindy Boggs of Louisiana), recalls her father's change of heart about speaking on behalf of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The presentation will highlight how the internet helps to bring the detailed descriptions of legislative processes and procedures, personal and political anecdotes, and recollections about the evolving nature of the institution to a wide-ranging audience. Making the House's oral history program available on the web is an important step in helping people to better understand the inner workings of Congress.

Katharine A. Scott

The United States Senate is often center-stage in periods of national crisis and transformation. While senators have attracted most of the public attention, they have been supported by legions of Senate officers and staff, individuals who have influenced debate, shaped public policy, and instigated quiet revolutions on Capitol Hill. These individuals have been the focus of the Senate Historical Office's oral history project.

This talk will explore contributions made by Senate staff working behind the scenes to support the institution during times of turmoil and crisis. Christine McCreary, a modest and efficient Senate secretary, challenged the de facto rules of segregation that governed the Capitol Hill working environment of the 1950s and 1960s. In 1974 Senate Parliamentarian Floyd Riddick helped prepare the Senate for an anticipated presidential impeachment trial. When a presidential impeachment trial did come--in 1999--Riddick's oral history interview proved to be an invaluable guide to Senate leaders and officers. Following the attacks of September and October 2001, Senate historians conducted a series of exit interviews with staff to record their experiences. These interviews informed the Senate as it revised existing emergency plans and procedures.

Over the past 35 years, the Senate Historical Office has interviewed these individuals and many others, including clerks, police officers, staff directors, reporters, photographers, Senate pages, and senators. This presentation will feature interviews with a few of the important, though little known, members of the Senate community who supported the institution through periods of national crisis.

### **Session 12.8      Women Against Violence**

Pavithra Narayanan

#### **Lighting a torch for Manipur: A story of the Meira Paibis**

The North-East of India, for the Indian government, the media, and the public, for the most part, has signified insurgency, unrest, and violence. Altogether omitted from public discussions are the problems that have produced civil unrest or the violence caused by the Indian Army. However, in July 2004, in an unprecedented and tragic form of protest, an organized women-led movement of the Meira Paibis (Bearers of the Torch), made sure that the entire country would turn its attention towards the North-East. Enraged by the brutal rape and murder of Manorama Devi by army personnel, twelve of the forty Meira Paibis who had gathered, stripped naked in front of the gates of the Army headquarters in Imphal, the capital city of Manipur, and held up a sign that read "Indian Army, Rape Us!" The protest shocked the nation and catalyzed Manipuris across the country to protest Manorama Devi's killing. The single demand of the protestors was the removal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from Manipur. The greater the demand, the greater were the number of armed forces deployed, and for months after the Manorama Protest, Manipur literally burned. This paper places the violence that engulfed the State after the courageous protest of the Meira Paibis within a historical framework of postcolonial struggles and sites of resistance that are often omitted from national histories. Through interviews with the Meira Paibis, I examine the collective action by these women, who, in the absence of protective governments and policies have emerged as one of the most formidable women's organizations in history protecting the rights of ordinary citizens of Manipur. Their voices remind us that there are other narratives that run parallel to popular historical narratives and that it is imperative that the national history of India be interwoven with these alternative histories.

## **Session 13.1      The Reflections Documentary Project: A Model for Community-Based Oral History**

Dr. Melinda Marie Jetté

### **Collaboration, Dialogue, and Debate: A Public Historian's Reflections on the *Reflections* Oral History Documentary Film Project**

In this paper Melinda Jetté will provide an overview of the collaborative process that led to the development of the *Reflections* project, an oral history documentary film series produced by the Keene Public Library (in Keene, New Hampshire) in conjunction with several regional partners. Professor Jetté will also outline some of the debates in the production process that called for dialogue and debate between members of the project steering committee. Lastly, Professor Jetté will offer some reflections on the project from her perspective as a public historian working in both the academy and in local communities. The *Reflections* project was a unique effort that offered residents in the Monadnock region of southwestern New Hampshire the opportunity to preserve and share their community stories, while also providing the production team members with valuable lessons about the processes of negotiation and collaboration characteristic of community-based projects.

## **Session 13.2      The Politics Marriage and Family**

Mary Ellen Bell

Susan E. Bell

### **What to do with all this Stuff?: Memory, Family, and Material Objects**

This paper explores the meaning of objects in making families and memories from the perspective of two sisters. We show and tell a story of sorting through “stuff” collected by our mother’s and father’s families from the 19th century to the present. Two societal transformations shape our early 21<sup>st</sup> century American story. The first is demographic. We are members of the baby boom, now in our 50s, and like many others in our generation we are taking care of our parents, who are surviving well into old age. The second is technological. Our parents’ “stuff” includes boxes of letters and photographs, tangible paper-based material objects. Digital images and electronic mail are replacing letter-writing and photographs in documenting and preserving family histories and memories. Our story begins after we moved our 83 year-old mother into assisted living in December 2008. We tell the story using eight objects we selected during the sorting process. In dialogue with each other about each of the objects, we reflect on the process of sorting, how our different experiences in the family shaped the sorting process and how the sorting process gave new meanings to our relationship as daughters and sisters. We conclude by exploring the themes of gender, privilege, and travel that emerged through the telling. We also consider how the diverging and intersecting paths we have taken as adults have infused our choices of what to do with all this stuff. More generally we consider the lessons from our story about how objects make family, how families make memories, how choices about keeping or not keeping objects contribute to the production of family histories and legacies, and how the demographic and technological transformations of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century are shaping families and memories.

Sarah M. Dennison

### **Domestic Diversity 1953:**

#### **A Story of Interracial Marriage and The Rhetoric of ‘Liberal’ Racism**

In 1953, marriage between whites and people of color was illegal in 27 states. But that doesn’t mean that there were no interracial marriages, just that it was both dangerous and unpopular (to say the least) to marry someone of a different “race.” It was not just the law that prevented interracial marriages, the objections and rejections of family and friends were strong barriers as well. We usually think about racism in terms racial epithets and slurs, but there is more to it. There is rhetoric and reasoning of racism that deludes many into thinking they are not racist. It can be the language of ‘some of my best friends’ or ‘that’s just their culture,’ but whatever the form, it is merely polite society’s version of racial epithets. When Pete and Tee Beveridge got married in 1953, his family wrote dozens of letters objecting. Their words reflect not the violent language we associate with the likes of the Klu Klux Klan, but carefully reasoned, rational, and liberal arguments against the marriage. As reasoned as they were, they were racist nonetheless. This presentation examines such “polite” words and liberal arguments to reveal intractable racism.

Michael John

### **Families in Crisis:**

#### **Jewish and non-Jewish mixed marriages 1930s – 1950s in Central Europe**

Concerning the Jewish population, intermarriages were often interpreted as indication of the will to assimilate. The 1920s were an era of secularization, too, especially in the urban areas of Central Europe. In this light Jewish and non-Jewish brides and grooms could be seen as pioneers of a more tolerant, convivial and plural society. In Vienna, Berlin, Prague or Budapest the intermarriage quota of Jews and non-Jews were quite high at that time. Several years later, after the National Socialist seizure of power the Nuremberg race laws and especially the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour” prevented marriages between Jews and non-Jews. In Germany these race laws became effective in 1935, in Austria in 1938, in German speaking parts of Bohemia and Moravia in 1938/39. People involved in Jewish-non Jewish marriages or partnerships were pressurized enormously as their families. Primarily based on 20 interviews with Jewish and non-Jewish marriage partners and their children the address will focus on the discussion of mixed marriages and mixed families primarily in Austria (in addition: some cases in Germany and Bohemia/Moravia). The tragedy of mixed families was mostly personalized in the existence of a second generation, which was named by the Nazi terminology “Mischlinge” (“mixed race”). The discussion did not end in 1945. It was a “hot potato” in the DP-camps as well as in Austrian and German societies. According to reliable US-American polls 1946-48 in Austrian cities up to 18 % of the respondents answered that an Austrian girl should get “punished” by starting a sexual relation with a

Jew. During the 1950s and 1960s the situation began to ease, the number of marriages and partnerships between Jews and non-Jews was on the rise again.

### **Session 13.3     FILM SCREENING: World Historians Speak Out: Perspectives, Projections and Pedagogy**

Andrew Darien

For 26 years, the World History Association (WHA) has been at the forefront of world history scholarship and pedagogy, and has illuminated the transnational, transregional, and transcultural dimensions of the past. The WHA has pulled thousands of scholars and teachers out of their regional provincialisms and compelled them to identify connections among cultures and see the big picture of our global past. And yet there is a certain audacity to this project. Can one truly represent the history of the entire world? How does one engage in this kind of macrohistory while doing justice to the infinite number of rich cultural traditions of the world? As one pans out to view the collective whole, what can one perceive, and what gets obscured? How do university and secondary school teachers squeeze the history of the world into the confines of an academic semester or year? In an age in which so many historians are trained as area specialists, how do they equip themselves to teach the history of places and eras about which they may know very little? This session explores these questions through the video life histories of the founding fathers and mothers of the World History Association. The documentary includes interviews with more than a dozen world historians, including pioneering figures such as Jerry Bentley, Kevin Reilly, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, Candice Goucher, and Patrick Manning.

### **Session 13.5     In Their Own Words: Giving Tools to a Displaced Urban Community**

Melanie Shell-Weiss

#### **The Power of Place: Race and Community in East Baltimore**

East Baltimore is sometimes called "the cradle of black Baltimore community" because this neighborhood was often the first place African American families lived when they arrived in the city of Baltimore. Despite this long, rich past, much of the history of black East Baltimore has been lost or destroyed, preserved only in limited fragments, in scattered repositories, or not at all. It is also an area that has experienced dramatic transitions, both social and physical. This has never been truer than it is today. Located just steps from Johns Hopkins University's Hospital and Medical Campus, large segments of the surrounding communities that make up East Baltimore are currently being razed and rebuilt altogether through an urban renewal effort called the East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI). As a result, the history of this community and the thousands of families who have lived and worked here is at risk of being lost altogether.

In Fall 2008, the Center for Africana Studies at The Johns Hopkins University launched a five-year initiative that aims to recover at least some of this history, while also creating a living resource and framework for ongoing discussion between city residents and members of the university community. Now in its second year, it seems appropriate to reflect on the lessons we have learned to date, the challenges we have faced, and to solicit input from the larger oral history community and oral history practitioners on how best to move forward and to strengthen this collaboration. This paper provides an overview of the project as well as an assessment of the strengths and challenges the project has faced to date.

Michael M. Rogers

#### **Understanding Social "Movements": Oral History at the Intersection of Community Organizing and Undergraduate Education**

As an undergraduate student at the Johns Hopkins University, I have been privileged to work very closely with residents of the Middle East neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland as they contend with the profound changes that the East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI) imposes on their lives and on the place that they call home. EBDI is a \$1.8 billion public-private partnership among federal, state, and local governments, philanthropic agencies, and the Johns Hopkins University aimed at redeveloping 88-acres of Middle East, one of Baltimore's poorest neighborhoods, by using eminent domain powers to relocate hundreds of families. For nearly two years, I have volunteered with the Save Middle East Action Committee, a 501(c)(3) grassroots community organization of Middle East residents that has advocated for social justice and equitable treatment for themselves and their neighbors for most of the past decade. During this time, I have attended and documented numerous community meetings in which many residents described the pain and disruption that "tearing apart" their community has brought.

In my dual roles as both university student and community activist, I have taken part in the community organizing activities of a group of residents seeking to be "made whole" in this context of massive displacement while also contributing to a growing body of oral histories of Middle East Baltimore residents gathered as part of an undergraduate class. Departing from my experiences and observations as a participant-observer in a neighborhood movement, I offer two sets of intersecting reflections. I consider, on one hand, the power of oral history as a framework for bringing the resources of a research institution to bear in documenting a collective history that might otherwise be lost, and making it available to a broad public; and on the other, oral history as part of a service-learning experience that brings student face-to-face with the people and communities whose words and actions actively shape histories.

Thomas Smith

### **Using Open-Source Software to Make Oral Histories Searchable, Tagable, and Available to a Diverse Community**

In 2008, the Johns Hopkins Center for Africana Studies launched the East Baltimore Oral History Project in an effort to preserve this history, as well as a record of the EBDI relocation and its effect on members of the Middle East community. By May 2009, the project had amassed a large collection of materials, including nearly thirty digitally-recorded interviews. Because the project's goals included making all findings publicly available, the Center for Africana Studies was faced with the challenge of sharing its growing collection such that it would be useful and accessible for community members, researchers, and educators alike. The result was the development, in partnership with the Johns Hopkins Center for Educational Resources, of the Africana Studies Oral History Player.

The OHP is a web application which runs in a cloud-computing environment; built entirely using open source software, it is designed to make the project's entire digital collection available to anyone with an internet connection. In addition to providing un-abridged streaming audio of every EBOHP interview conducted to date, the player allows any user to add customized, time-stamped tags to any interview. Full transcripts linked to timestamps are provided as well. All data is then fully searchable; as a result, anyone using the player can enter a search term, see all references to that term across the entire collection, and immediately jump to a timestamp in order to hear the relevant audio in the interviewee's own words.

This presentation will include both a demonstration of the player itself (slated for public launch in May 2010) and a discussion of the opportunities it provides for sharing stories of Middle East and the EBDI relocation with diverse groups of researchers, scholars, and community members. Additionally, the presentation will include information on how other projects can use the open source OHP software to organize and present their own digital collections.